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SUGGESTION AND AUTOSUGGESTION

SUGGESTION AND AUTOSUGGESTION

A Psychological and Pedagogical Study
Based upon the Investigations Made by
the New Nancy School

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Translated from the French by
EDEN AND CEDAR PAUL

NEW YORK
DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY
1922

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First Printing, January, 1921
Second Printing, October, 1921
Third Printing, March, 1922

PRINTED IN THE U. S. A.

Dedicated
with grateful acknowledgments
to

EMILE COUÉ

the steadfast Worker and Pioneer

TRANSLATORS' PREFACE

THE dissociation of hypnotism from mysticism and superstition was efficiently begun by two investigators, Alexandre Bertrand and James Braid. Bertrand (*Traité du somnambulisme*, Paris, 1823; *Du magnétisme animal en France*, Paris, 1826) insisted especially upon the psychological determinants of the phenomena in question. He maintained that what we now call the hypnotic state was brought about through the influence of the imagination of the patients acting upon themselves. Herein we have the germ of Coué's theory of autosuggestion as expounded in the following pages. Braid, on the other hand (various writings, from 1841 to his death in 1860), inclined at the outset rather to the physiological explanation of what he was the first to term "hypnotism." It is interesting to note that Braid was a pioneer in the therapeutic use of reflective autosuggestion. He describes his own sufferings, in September, 1844, from a severe attack of muscular rheumatism, which had made it impossible for him to sleep for three successive nights. He then hypnotized himself in the presence of two friends. "At the expiration of nine minutes they aroused me, and, to my agreeable surprise, I was quite free from pain, being able to move in any way with perfect ease. . . . I had seen like results with many patients; but it is one thing to hear of pain, and another to feel it. My suffering was so exquisite that I could not imagine anyone else ever suffered so intensely

as myself on that occasion; and therefore I merely expected mitigation, so that I was truly and agreeably surprised to find myself quite free from pain. . . . A week thereafter I had a slight return, which I removed by hypnotizing myself once more; and I have remained quite free from rheumatism ever since, now nearly six years." The observation is quoted by Arthur Edward Waite in his biographical introduction to *Braid on Hypnotism* (pp. 45-6). To the contemporary reader, and above all to students of Coué and Baudouin, it is obvious that the essential feature in the cure was not the "hypnotism" but the autosuggestion.

Yet the idea that unconscious autosuggestion is responsible for many of our troubles, moral and physical, was slow to mature. Even to-day, people fail to recognize that they are largely wrong when they speak of " the ills that flesh is heir to," and that they should rather in many cases speak of " the ills that fancy breeds." Still more slowly has come the recognition that in reflective autosuggestion, scientifically applied, we have in very truth the faith that moves mountains. Healers, official and unofficial, have at all times made use of the power of suggestion, but the use has been for the most part unconscious. James Goodhart, in his Harveian lectures on *Common Neuroses* (1894, p. 129), tells us that " there are many conditions in which the cure must come mainly from within, our function in chief being to call out this dormant power." But for Goodhart the " rational treatment " of disease was still to be found in skilled advice as to regimen and the like; the " dormant power " of reflective autosuggestion was not yet revealed to his discerning gaze. In the most outstanding British work on psychotherapeutics, J. Milne

Bramwell's *Hypnotism* (third edition, 1913), the word autosuggestion is not to be found in the index. Yet Bramwell inclines to accept the theory that the phenomena of hypnotism are chiefly explicable by the conception of "the subliminal consciousness," and he records as the main feature of this theory that "the essential characteristic of the hypnotic state is the subject's power over his own organism." Here we obviously verge upon Coué's teaching. But the affiliations of that teaching can be best understood in the light of a brief analysis of the development of the theory of hypnotism subsequent to the days of Bertrand and Braid.

Substantially, it may be said that the theory of the psychological determination of these phenomena now holds the field. Heidenhain and others cultivated the physiological theory with vigour, and for a time with success. Charcot and the Salpêtrière school maintained that the phenomena of hypnotism were mainly, if not exclusively, morbid; that they were manifestations of major hysteria or hystero-epilepsy. But by serious investigators to-day it is generally admitted that the views of the Nancy school, the views of Liébault and Bernheim, represent the truth, and that the pathological theory of hypnotism now possesses no more than historical interest. For twenty years A. A. Liébault practised hypnotism at Nancy, having a gratuitous clinic for his poorer patients. He rediscovered that expectation is the primary factor in the causation of hypnotism, that increased susceptibility is the leading characteristic of the hypnotic state, and that the suggester's influence upon his subjects is exerted through mental rather than through bodily channels. Hippolyte Bernheim, professor of medicine at Nancy, was the philosophical ex-

pounder of these theories, and it is with the name of Bernheim (died in 1919, at the age of eighty) that the ideas of the first Nancy school are especially associated. Edouard Coué, as Charles Baudouin explains in his preface, has like Liébault devoted many of his best years to the practice of psychotherapeutics in a free clinic, for a time at Troyes and subsequently at Nancy. Baudouin is the first great theoretical exponent of Coué's teaching. He bears much the same relationship to Coué that Bernheim bore to Liébault. He and Coué will speak for themselves throughout the present volume. Enough here to insist on three of the most essential and novel features in the teaching of the New Nancy School:

1. The main factor in hypnotic phenomena is not heterosuggestion but autosuggestion; and, as a corollary, the chief advantages of psychotherapeutics can be secured without a suggester and without the more salient features of the hypnotic state.

2. Of fundamental importance to success is the recognition of what Coué terms "the law of reversed effort," the law that so long as the imagination is adverse, so long as a countersuggestion is at work, effort of the conscious will acts by contraries. We must think rightly, or rather must imagine rightly, before we can will rightly. In a word, our formula must not be, "who wills can"; but "who thinks can" or "who imagines can."

3. The most significant phenomena of autosuggestion occur in the domain of the subconscious (unconscious). The new powers which autosuggestion offers to mankind are based upon the acquirement of a reflective control of the operations of the subconscious. Herein, as Baudouin shows in his Preface and his Conclusion, the teachings of the New Nancy School at once confirm and

supplement the theories of the Freudians and the data of psychoanalysis.

In the subtitle of *Suggestion and Autosuggestion* we are told that it is a "psychological and pedagogical study." The educational applications of the teachings of the New Nancy School are, if possible, of even greater interest and importance than the curative applications. It is not always easy to separate the two categories, for from a wide outlook the mentality of the majority of "normal" human beings, the products of what passes to-day by the name of education and the outcome of the suggestions of our exceedingly rudimentary social environment, may be said to have an essentially morbid quality and to need all the relief that can possibly be given by the healing art. Consequently the apostles of the new psychology, the Freudians equally with the pupils of the New Nancy School, are educationists as well as therapeutists. We find a whole section on "Education and Child-Study" in Ernest Jones's *Psychoanalysis;* while the American writer, Wilfrid Lay, has recently supplemented his volume *Man's Unconscious Conflict* by a work devoted to the educational side of Freudianism, and entitled *The Child's Unconscious Mind.* But the implications of Coué's practical discoveries and of Baudouin's theories are destined to influence educational work more radically even than Freudianism can influence it. Intelligent educationists have long recognized that a large proportion of the effects of education, good or bad, are due to suggestion; but a few years ago M. W. Keatinge, in his volume *Suggestion in Education* (first edition 1907, second edition 1911) criticized the term autosuggestion as mislead-

ing. He wrote, " the idea is really suggested from without, and appears to be 'self-suggested' only to the person in whose mind it has been latent." Nevertheless, most careful readers of Baudouin's book will we think agree that in education, as in psychotherapeutics, what goes on in the subject's subconscious is what really counts in the whole process, and that upon the successful appeal to the subconscious largely depends the success of the teacher no less than the success of the healer. Educational theory will have to be wholly reconsidered in the light of the doctrine of autosuggestion as taught at Nancy and at the Jean Jacques Rousseau Institute in Geneva. A careful examination of the successes of the latest educational methods, like those of Maria Montessori and those of Faria de Vasconcellos (*A New School in Belgium,* London, 1919), will show that their value is in large part due to an unwitting appeal to the subconscious, and to a skilful though not as yet fully understood utilization of the pupils' powers of autosuggestion.

As for the philosophical, psychological, and ethical implications of the new doctrine, yet more interesting (to persons interested in such abstractions) than its bearings upon pedagogy and upon therapeutics, it is not for the translators to add a word here to what Baudouin writes in his eloquent Conclusion on " Suggestion and the Will." Those who like to know whither they are being led, may usefully read this brief philosophical section before approaching the preliminary problem "What is Suggestion." In our opinion the Conclusion is equally valuable as a preamble to the Introduction, and might be read first as well as last. For, after making that intimate acquaintanceship with *Suggestion and*

Autosuggestion which is one of the privileges of a translator, we unhesitatingly endorse the author's claim that the teachings of the New Nancy School are destined, in conjunction with the teachings of psychoanalysis, to effect a renovation of psychology, medicine, and pedagogy. As supplements to Bergsonianism the two will probably achieve the renovation of philosophy as well.

EDEN AND CEDAR PAUL.

London, May, 1920.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

SINCE the year 1910 there has been in progress at Nancy a psychological and medico-pedagogical movement which we are entitled to regard as one of the notable scientific happenings of the present epoch.[1] The terms autosuggestion, the education of the will, the force of thought, self-control, have long been current. But with the rise of the New Nancy School we have for the first time the elements of a really methodical synthesis of the phenomena and the disciplines which these terms connote.

The pioneer in this development is a man whose devotion is rivalled by his modesty. During the years 1885 and 1886, Emile Coué witnessed the work and the experiments of Liébault, who was, as everyone knows, the father of the doctrine of suggestion, the founder of the first Nancy school, and the teacher of Bernheim. Subsequently, Coué, whose financial resources were slender, had to devote most of his energies to gaining a livelihood; but, like all men whose minds are dominated by an idea, he went on working unremittingly in silence and alone. He studied the further developments of the Nancy principles in the United States, and was able to extract from the new theories such serious, practical, and solid content as they possessed. He brushed aside

[1] The presence of the enemy at the gates of Nancy imposed inevitable hindrances to the work, but did not interrupt it completely. Herein is a sign of vitality.

all that was no better than advertisement and humbug, and he likewise rejected the mystical postulates which underlay some of the theories. By the closing years of the nineteenth century, Coué had grasped the thought of which he was in search. He discovered in autosuggestion the powerful and widely diffused force of which hypnotic suggestion, the only form of suggestion hitherto studied in medicine, is but one among many applications. Through repeated experiments he was further able to show that this force was efficacious in troubles that were manifestly organic; and he proved that the education of the force, which though often confused with the will is quite distinct from the will, is a simple matter and within the competence of all. Contemporaneously with but independently of the idea of psychoanalysis (developed along divergent lines by Breuer and Freud, on the one hand, and by the Zurich school, on the other), the idea of the New Nancy School, clearer than the former and more akin to the French spirit, leads us, by a path parallel with that opened by psychoanalysis, into the little-known domain of the subconscious, and contributes likewise to the renovation of psychology, medicine, and pedagogy. The two outlooks are complementary.

By his perfect disinterestedness, by the establishment of a free clinic, Coué has been able to extend his experience to far wider limits than those known to most practitioners.[1] In this way his energies were directed more and more into the practical field, were monopolized, if I may use the phrase, by the apostolate of action. He has written no more than a few articles in the bulletin of

[1] During the months preceding the outbreak of the war he was consulted by more than one hundred persons daily, so that the annual average of consultations would have been 40,000.

the school,[1] and some papers for psychological congresses.[2] Even scantier are the writings of his pupils. The New Nancy School supplies the elements of an entire psychology, but this psychology remains unwritten. It has therefore seemed to me that it would be serviceable to attempt the presentation of a first coördinated outlook, however incomplete, upon questions whose theoretical and practical interest is of so high an order. Pre-eminently I have assumed the pedagogical standpoint;[3] that is to say, I have attempted to show how, by a simple process of education, a latent power may be made kinetic. It is this transformation, above all, that is important.

But on the threshold of my work, I wish to pay due homage to the founder of the New Nancy School, to the beloved teacher to whom these pages owe the best part of their substance, to the man but for whom they would never have been written.

CHARLES BAUDOUIN.

[1] Société lorraine de psychologie appliquée. Quarterly bulletin, published by Barbier at Nancy.

[2] A few interesting reports read to the Psychological Congress at Paris in 1913.

[3] The subject matter of the following pages has been expounded in courses of lectures given at the Jean Jacques Rousseau Institute in Geneva, where I have also organized the practical and gratuitous teaching of autosuggestion.

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS SUGGESTION?

WHEN we speak of suggestion, our first difficulty is to come to an agreement as to the meaning of the term. Furthermore, questions of words are at the same time questions of things; a definition is a theory.

It may be true that the meaning of the term suggestion is still somewhat vague; but this does not give anyone the right to formulate a purely arbitrary definition, haphazard. For by now, in the language universally accepted by science, the word has come to be applied to precise and well-known facts, and a definition which should fail to take these facts into the reckoning would be inadmissible.

We have to ask whether all the facts, or a very large majority of them, exhibit a common specific character. If this be so, then wherever such a character is encountered, we are entitled to speak of suggestion.

Among the phenomena universally recognized as belonging to the domain of suggestion, two groups of very different type have drawn the attention of various observers, some persons inclining especially to the study of one group, and others to the study of the other. We have to ascertain which of these two groups is the most characteristic, and which we should therefore choose in drawing up our definition of suggestion.

A subject is hypnotized, and the operator orders him

to look at an imaginary bird: the subject has the suggested hallucination. Or, on the other hand, a doctor may cure his patient by a simple affirmation of cure.— In each of these experiments, two phases can be distinguished:

1. An idea,[1] proposed or imposed by the operator, is accepted by the mind of the subject.

2. This idea undergoes transformation into an action, so that the object of the idea (in the instances given, the hallucination or the cure) is realized.

These two phases recur in all the phenomena which it is generally agreed to regard as suggestion. But which of the two is essentially and truly characteristic? Here comes the divergence of opinion.

Public opinion gives its verdict for the first phase. Suggestion, for public opinion, has as a fundamental requirement two terms, an operator and a subject. It consists in the forcible control of the comparatively feeble will of the subject by the comparatively powerful will of the operator.

The domination will be facilitated by a peculiar state known as hypnosis, and it is through the combined influence of domination and hypnosis that we arrive at the second phase, the realization of the idea.

These strange realizations, so astounding in their accuracy, which hypnotism has revealed to us, could not (it is contended) be brought about in default of certain peculiar conditions of which the leading condition is the presence of a suggester.

[1] The term "idea" will be used here in the widest sense of "representation," and will denote the image as well as the concept.

The theory just expounded is invalidated by the facts.

To settle the question decisively let us ask what are the profoundest changes which the suggestion of an operator can produce in a hypnotized subject, and let us see whether an *isolated* subject can, unaided, produce similar changes in himself.

To clear up this point we may consult one among the practitioners who have done most to widen "the frontiers of hypnosis," Bonjour of Lausanne. Let us examine the maximum result he has secured.[1]

A matter of outstanding interest is the regulation of childbirth by hypnotic suggestion :

" I wished to ascertain what part the brain could play in the production of childbirth. Various theories have been propounded on this subject, but none of them take account of the action of the nervous system. Why is a child born on any particular day instead of on the following day? Why do deliveries take place more frequently by night than by day? I have advanced a theory which lays stress on the accentuation of internal sensations during sleep ; the discharge of the nervous and muscular mechanism which leads to the delivery is analogous, in my opinion, to what we see in dreams. During sleep, some trifling sensation from the periphery (in the case now under consideration, from the uterus) or from the brain (dream) is exaggerated by the brain and sets at work the automatic centres in the medulla, which arouse the uterus to contraction. If my theory

[1] Cf. Bonjour, passim. More particularly, Une preuve nouvelle de l'influence du psychique sur le physique, Communication faite au troisième congrès international de psychologie et de psychothérapie à Munich.

were sound, it should be possible, I held, to establish its truth by the use of hypnotism.

" Professor Rapin, who was at this time chief of the maternity hospital and to whom I had spoken of the matter, begged me to make the experiment in his wards. He selected a young woman whose confinement was due three weeks later. This was on a Tuesday, and I proposed to arrange for the successful fulfilment of the experiment on Friday. There were, therefore, but three days for preparation.

" Nevertheless I felt sure that the desired result would be secured, for my observations had absolutely convinced me of the part played by the brain in determining the time of delivery.

" I suggested to the young woman that she should fall asleep on the Thursday at two o'clock, that the labour should begin during the night of Thursday-Friday. I told her that I should come at seven o'clock in the morning of Friday and that the child would be born at noon.

"On Thursday at four in the afternoon I went to the maternity hospital. The patient had fallen into a profound sleep at five minutes past two, though her companions had vainly endeavoured to prevent her. I again told her how I had regulated the course of events, and left her with an order that she should no longer hear any voices except those of Professor Rapin and his assistant.

"The following day I did not reach the hospital until half-past nine instead of seven o'clock, this putting things back by two and a half hours. The woman told me that throughout the night she had been aware of the sensations I had suggested. The obstetric assistant declared that labour had not yet begun, and my own exami-

nation confirmed this statement. But I was convinced of the reality of the woman's own sensations. They were the outcome of suggestion, and I could increase them at will. This is what actually happened. After suggestions had been continued for a quarter of an hour, the neuromuscular machinery was at work, and by the time when Professor Rapin arrived at eleven I was satisfied that my experiment was succeeding. He asked me to demonstrate the case to the students. I had not expected this complication, but I knew that nothing could now interfere with the successful issue, and I agreed. After the clinical lecture, Professor Rapin and I went down into the town, he, convinced that the child would not be born for three or four weeks, and I myself satisfied that all the phenomena of impending delivery corresponded to what I had desired to produce by suggestion. I had hardly finished lunch when I was summoned to the hospital. By half-past three labour was over, and I reawakened the young woman, who till then was not aware that her baby had been born.'"[1]

But the chief importance of Bonjour's work is that he has clearly shown the power of suggestion in organic disease, whereas Bernheim believed that suggestion was solely efficacious in functional disorders.

Bonjour studied the part played by suggestion in the curing of warts. As the result of numerous observations he came to the conclusion that in about half the cases warts can be cured by a single sitting in which suggestion is practised for two minutes.

The cure of a wart is a trifling matter, but a little thing may have weighty implications. The definite proof

[1] Bonjour, Guérisons miraculeuses modernes, Baillière, Paris, 1913.

that suggestive treatment can be efficacious in disease that is not purely functional was a discovery of considerable importance.

Bonjour passed on to study the suggestive treatment of other organic maladies. For instance, one of his patients was suffering from a corneal ulcer which, had it proved intractable, would have caused blindness. It was completely cured under hypnotic treatment.[1]

Modifications in an important and complicated mechanism like the mechanism of childbirth, and, on the other hand, organic modifications—here we find the maximum of which we were in search. Now if an isolated subject, without hypnotism and in the absence of a suggester, can present analogous phenomena, if, that is to say, the subject's own thought can in certain instances bring about similar modifications, we shall be obliged to conclude that the essential and characteristic element in the process of suggestion is the second phase (the transformation of the idea into action) and not the first phase (the acceptance of the idea suggested by another).

That this is actually so, the reader will learn from the facts analyzed in the following pages.

He will see how the idea of an organic modification can produce that modification in the individual who thinks the idea. He will see that this action of the idea may be more powerful and more widespread in an isolated subject than in a hypnotized subject, and that autosuggestion is really the prototype of all suggestion.

[1] Cf. the cases reported by Auguste Forel in his Hypnotism, English translation by H. W. Armit, Rebman, London, 1906. Among other cases, this author records one of strabismus and hemeralopia due to organic trouble, in which great improvement followed upon suggestive treatment.

The conclusion must therefore be drawn that the presence of a suggester is not essential to suggestion; it is enough to have a subject. In other words, suggestion cannot be defined as a phenomenon of transference wherein the starting-point is the consciousness of the operator and the terminus the consciousness of the subject. It must be defined as a work which proceeds wholly within the subject. If we do not allow ourselves to be repelled by barbarisms, we may find it convenient to say that suggestion is not an "inter-individual" phenomenon but an "intra-individual" phenomenon. Once for all, we must distinguish between the idea of suggestion and the idea of submission, of dependence upon another's will. We must not confound suggestion with subjection.

We have now to examine an objection which is well stated by Binet in the beginning of his book *La suggestibilité* (Paris, 1900). He writes as follows:

"We must obviously regard as erroneous the opinion of many investigators who look upon suggestion as an 'idea which undergoes transformation into an action.' On this theory, suggestion would be confounded with the association of ideas and with mental phenomena in general. The term would be almost meaningless, for the transformation of an idea into an action is a psychological phenomenon which manifests itself whenever an idea becomes sufficiently powerful. In the narrower signification of the term, in what we may call its technical meaning, suggestion is a moral pressure exercised by one person on another. The pressure is moral, by which we mean that it is not a purely physical operation, but an influence which acts through ideas, through the instru-

mentality of concepts, emotions, and volitions. In most cases, the spoken word is the means by which this influence is conveyed, and a definite command furnishes the best example of the kind."

In a word, for Binet the first phase of the above-described process is the characteristic phenomenon, whereas for us the second phase is the essential one.

The chief reason why Binet holds the view he does, is that to define suggestion as "an idea which undergoes transformation into an action" makes the signification of the term too wide. The word is thereby applied to a great number of well-known facts for which no new name is required.

Binet's criticism is well founded, but the definition which he proposes is open to the same objection, and perhaps to a still greater degree. He considers that a definite command is the typical suggestion. A few pages further on, in conformity with this view, he treats as absolutely identical the words "suggestibility" and "obedience."

The truth is that this definition, "Suggestion is an idea which undergoes transformation into an action," is erroneous because it is incomplete. We do not need to supply an entirely new definition, but to add what is lacking.

It will suffice to appeal to a characteristic which is plainly manifest in the simplest phenomena of suggestion. The characteristic in question is that the realization of the idea is brought about by subconscious activity, is effected without the subject's being aware of it. The idea of cure is proposed to his mind, and the cure is realized without his knowing how. An action is suggested to the subject during induced sleep, and he is

told that the action is to be performed some hours later. The action duly takes place, sometimes without any consciousness on the part of the subject. More frequently, however, he knows that he is performing the action but is unaware of the true motive. In like manner, in the case of childbirth recorded by Bonjour, the extensive work which culminated in the realization of the idea went on outside the subject's consciousness. He only became aware of the result after everything was over and when informed of the fact by others.

In the case of autosuggestion, it is precisely this unawareness which enables us to distinguish the phenomenon from an ordinary act of volition, from one wherein the subject realizes his idea through conscious effort and while uninterruptedly supervising the work of performance.

Thus suggestion may be briefly defined as *the subconscious realization of an idea.*

In addition to the reasons already given, the foregoing definition of suggestion is useful on theoretical grounds.

The mastery of one will by another, the act of domination with which some wish to identify suggestion, is far from being a simple psychological phenomenon, an instance of the working of a single law. It is the resultant of numerous causes, known or unknown, and extremely complex. The first of these causes is the "personal influence" of the operator. Next, on the part of the subject, we have the "affective rapport" between the subject and the operator. This relationship may be one of love; it may be one of fear; it may be one wherein love and fear are variously mingled.

On the other hand, if suggestion be defined as we propose, its working becomes subordinated to a psychological law which is comparatively simple, and whose principle is well known even though all its applications may not be familiar. This law is the one revealed by experiments with Chevreul's pendulum,[1] the law in accordance with which the idea tends to realize itself spontaneously. Henceforward suggestion, acting in accordance with a simple law, can be looked upon as a "force" in the scientific sense of this word. Suggestion is the putting into operation, by ourselves or by another, of the ideo-reflex power which exists in us all. (See below, Part III, Chapter II.)

No longer, then, need we look upon suggestion as indicating impotence and inferiority on the part of the subject. In essence, it is a power which, by accident and in special cases, may be used against us.

It was in such instances that suggestion was first seen at work. In like manner, electricity was first seen at work in the form of lightning, before man had learned to turn its powers to account as an illuminant or as a means of transport. The task before us now is to make a good use of suggestion, considering it as one of the natural forces, and looking upon it, not as a power for dominating others, but as an instrument for self-mastery.

What has been written above shows that suggestion exhibits itself under numerous forms. Hence, classification is necessary.

The first thought which arises in this connection is to distinguish between autosuggestion and heterosugges-

[1] M. E. Chevreul, De la baguette divinatoire, du pendule dit explorateur et des tables tournantes, Paris, 1854.

tion, according as the ideoreflex power has been put into operation by ourselves or by some one else.

There need not be any essential difference between the working of these two sorts of suggestion, just as there is no essential difference in the growth of a plant when I plant it and when the gardener plants it. But the distinction is none the less important, seeing that I shall have to invoke the gardener's aid in so far as I am myself ignorant of gardening.

But in respect of autosuggestions we may make a distinction that is perhaps even more important from the theoretical outlook. As we shall learn, there is a psychological condition prerequisite to all autosuggestion. This is that the idea should have a notable intensity, an intensity which is mainly the outcome of attention. An idea upon which attention is peculiarly concentrated, is an idea which tends to realize itself.

We shall find, therefore, in the psychology of attention, a principle for the classification of autosuggestions. Ribot rightly distinguishes between spontaneous attention and voluntary attention. The former, the only variety, or almost the only variety, of attention in the lower animals, in savages, and in young children, is directed towards everything which interests us, towards everything which helps or hinders us in our aims. The latter presupposes reflection and conscious effort. Spontaneous attention is displayed by us when our eye is caught by a striking colour. We show voluntary attention when we deliberately set ourselves to solve a problem.

In like manner, we shall distinguish among autosuggestions, spontaneous suggestion, and reflective or voluntary suggestion, according as the preliminary act of

attention has been spontaneous on the one hand or voluntary on the other. This distinction is comparable to that between wild plants and cultivated plants.

We have, therefore, three kinds of suggestion:

1. spontaneous suggestion
2. reflective suggestion [1]

} = autosuggestion

3. induced suggestion = heterosuggestion

We shall devote ourselves to the study of all of these. The education of the ideoreflex power, its training by oneself or by others, will be considered in the second and third parts. We shall be chiefly concerned with this education, for our outlook in the present volume is mainly practical. Part I may be considered as an indispensable introduction to Parts II and III.

But before entering into the heart of the subject, let us briefly complete the definition of suggestion given above by showing what are the relationships between the narrower sense in which we employ this term in psychology, and the wider sense wherein it is used in current speech.

Etymologically, to suggest signifies, to bring in surreptitiously, to bring in from beneath. In the wider sense, suggestion implies the *surreptitious* appearance of sentiments, ideas, actions, in a word of all the modifications that occur in our consciousness. The process resembles that by which fresh air enters a room unnoticed beneath a closed door. A thing is suggested to us when it enters

[1] The reader will learn later (Part II, Chapter I) why it is better to speak of reflective suggestion rather than of voluntary suggestion.

our consciousness without conscious effort on our part and sometimes in defiance of our will. It takes its rise in the work of our unconscious or subconscious self.

In this wider signification, we may say that a picture suggests to us a sentiment or a memory. We feel that the picture is the cause, the "occasional cause" as Malebranche would have said, of the memory or the sentiment. But the deeper cause is to be found in unconscious or subconscious work whose existence we can merely suspect. Something has been stirred in the depths of our personality. Thus, suggested states are contrasted with states to the production of which our will has contributed. They are effects whereof we neither see nor know the cause; they are like springs welling forth from the ground.

To help us to pass from this wider sense to the narrower sense of the word, let us now make the following hypothesis. At a higher level than the spring, a river has become engulfed beneath the soil as happens to certain streams in the Jura district. We realize that the spring is the same stream coming to light once more after flowing underground. A leaf which falls into the stream just as it is about to disappear, or one which we deliberately throw into the stream, will emerge at the spring, after it has been faithfully transported by the hidden stream through a region where no one could seize it in passing.

Thus an idea which has been introduced into the mind, or one which we have ourselves voluntarily introduced, will produce its effect as the sequel of subconscious activities and at the close of a shorter or longer period.

That is what is meant by suggestion as we understand it, in the technical sense of the term. Between this tech-

nical sense and the wider sense given to the word in everyday speech there is a difference analogous to that which exists between "force" in common parlance, and "force" as understood by physicists. There is no radical difference between the latter and the former, but in the technical use of the term we have less extension and greater precision.

It is well that this should be so, and that a word, when it passes from current use into technical use, should remain faithful to its derivation and to the genius of language.

PART ONE

SPONTANEOUS SUGGESTION

CHAPTER ONE

WHY DO WE IGNORE AUTOSUGGESTION?

A KNOWLEDGE of spontaneous suggestion is the necessary foundation for all reflective suggestion. We can resist or correct nature only in proportion as we are able to make a stand against nature by the use of nature's own weapons; in a word, by imitating nature. And we can only imitate nature in so far as we know her. Now autosuggestion, in its spontaneous form, is a natural phenomenon of our mental life, as natural as the phenomenon termed emotion, or the phenomenon termed idea. Moreover, the former phenomenon occurs just as frequently as either of the two latter. These statements are true although we do not play upon words, although we refrain from extending the significance of the term suggestion until it comes to denote (as in the usage of some writers) emotion and the association of ideas. For our part, we have been careful at the outset to restrict its meaning, and we shall sedulously avoid using it in any wider sense.

But if autosuggestion be a phenomenon of everyday experience, and if it be one which goes on within us, why is it so often overlooked, and why does its discovery come with the force of a revelation? There are numerous reasons.

1. In the first place, let the reader recall the definition of suggestion. He will remember that suggestion is a phenomenon exhibiting three phases:

First phase, the idea of a modification;

Second phase, the work of realization, performed unconsciously as far as the actual ego is concerned;

Third phase, the appearance of the modification that has been thought.

Now the second phase occurs without our being aware of it. Here, then, we have a causal chain whose two ends are within our grasp, but whose middle eludes us. Not without a certain amount of reflection can we convince ourselves that the ends we hold belong to the same chain.

2. On the other hand, this reflection is, from the nature of the case, absent from our habitual suggestions; for these are, above all, spontaneous phenomena. Examples to be subsequently given will make the reader understand more clearly the extent to which suggestion, in its natural form, is free from conscious effort. But inasmuch as we have said that an act of spontaneous attention is the starting-point of spontaneous suggestion, it will suffice for the moment if the reader will bear in mind how little such an act, which takes place without conscious effort, is likely to leave deep traces in the memory, or to arouse, retrospectively, reflection. Doubtless the object which attracts my spontaneous attention, the light which dazzles me, the melody which fascinates me, are graven in my memory with an intensity proportional to the keenness of my attention. But the act of perception, the mechanism of my awakening attention—what trace will that have left? I was absorbed in the act of contemplation. Like Condillac's statue, which had become "the scent of a rose,"[1] I was for the moment

[1] Condillac, Traité des sensations, Amsterdam, Paris, and London, 1754.

nothing more than the light or the melody. The perceiving subject had vanished before the intensity of the perceived object, and some difficulty is experienced in observing what was passing at the moment in the subject. Thus the second phase of suggestion eludes consciousness, while the first phase eludes observation.

3. There is an additional reason for our ignorance. Autosuggestion can operate upon us with incalculable power. Now if we permit this force to work spontaneously, in default of rational guidance, disastrous consequences may ensue, and do in fact often ensue. A large number of illnesses arise from this cause alone. Even in the case of morbid phenomena whose cause is obviously physical, it frequently happens among persons (and they form the enormous majority) who do not understand the mechanism of spontaneous suggestion, that this force considerably aggravates the malady. But if by our own insight or with the help of others we discover that we have been the architects of our own sufferings, we are extremely loath to admit so humiliating a truth. In fact we refuse to admit it, and directly the discovery presses upon our consciousness, there ensues what psychoanalysts have termed *repression*, the phenomenon whereby we are induced to forget the very reasons which have led us to the dreaded conclusion. This foolish vanity is far from being exceptional. Those who protest most energetically that they know naught of it, are often most completely enthralled by it, and their protests are nothing more than one of the numerous artifices which the censor employs to fool the consciousness. The same remark applies to the protests of persons who declare that they have never been the victims of unfortunate autosuggestions. We have all suffered in this

way, and especially those who regard themselves as immune.

These three reasons suffice to explain why we have remained so completely ignorant of phenomena which concern us so deeply. In ultimate analysis, every one of these reasons proves to be a manifestation of the activity of the "subconscious" or the "unconscious." Every one of them is a manifestation of the mental activity which goes on in us without our being aware of it. They are part of the furniture of that back shop of the mind; they belong to that life which goes on in the wings instead of on the stage; they are part of that world filled with a strangely vigorous activity, the world in which thought and action continue during sleep. The life of this underworld controls us unceasingly. It leads us at hazard, so long as we lack the clues. But it discloses to us good roads—as soon as we know them well enough to choose our way. Such is the knowledge we hope to acquire in the course of the following pages.

CHAPTER TWO

TYPICAL EXAMPLES

BEFORE classifying the numerous examples by which we propose to demonstrate the frequency and the diversity of spontaneous autosuggestions, we shall in the first instance, apart from all classification, give a few examples which will best enable the reader to understand the working of suggestion and will help him to realize its leading characteristics.

At the outset let us consider the well-known phenomenon of *fascination,* where the attention is so completely captured by an object that the person concerned continually returns to it in spite of himself. In certain neuropathic subjects, fascination displays itself in an aggravated form. But normal persons can grasp what we mean by fascination when they think of the attraction caused by a luminous point. A still better example is the auditory fascination exercised by a door banging repeatedly during the night, so that we cannot help listening for the recurrence of the sound. We cock our ears as we wait for its coming; and we curse the door that keeps us awake, not so much by the intensity of the noise as by the fact that we are continually on the alert.[1]

What has happened? The first thing is the working

[1] This example and other analogous ones have been ably analyzed by Paul Souriau of Nancy University. Cf. La suggestion dans l'art, Alcan, Paris.

of spontaneous attention. The isolated noise, breaking the silence of the night, naturally attracts the ear. Then, our attention recurring again and again to this noise, we imagine that it is impossible for us to refrain from attending. Next, the idea materializes (here we have suggestion at work), and in fact we are no longer able to withdraw the attention. We have spontaneously suggested our own impotence.

We now make repeated efforts to release the attention from the object which fascinates it, but at each successive effort we feel that our powerlessness becomes more evident. Here is the remarkable point: the effort counteracts itself, turning to the right when it wishes to turn to the left; our effort spontaneously reverses itself in accordance with the idea which actually dominates the mind and which has become a suggestion—the idea of impotence. In a word, the more we wish, the less are we able.

We shall see later that a definite law is here in operation. The characteristics just described as attaching to spontaneous suggestion will stand out far more clearly when they have been evoked as it were to order, by means of reflective or induced suggestion. Coué and other investigators noted these characteristics first of all when they had been artificially evoked, and were subsequently able to recognize them in purely spontaneous suggestions.

From fascination we pass by an easy stage to *obsession*, which is nothing more than a mental fascination, a fascination by images, memories, ideas, from which we cannot free the mind, simply because we think we cannot free it and because this thought becomes a suggestion.

The *fixed idea* is only the ultimate degree of obsession. Moreover, obsession and fascination, which become more overwhelming at every effort made to dispel them, can be dispelled by a reflective autosuggestion or by an induced suggestion. (Let me say parenthetically at this stage that reflective autosuggestion and induced suggestion comprise a form of action totally distinct from voluntary effort.)[1]

Neurasthenia may be considered from the neurological outlook. But mental conditions play a predominant part in this disorder. From the mental point of view it may be said that neurasthenia is an obsession by "black" ideas; melancholy, anguish, a sense of powerlessness, fears more or less well founded. Here, too, effort for deliverance is fatal. To use Coué's simile, the neurasthenic, like a man caught in a quicksand, engulfs himself more hopelessly with every effort he makes to get free. On the other hand, when, through countersuggestion or through any other cause, the autosuggestion of powerlessness disappears from the patient's mind, he immediately finds himself on the high road to recovery.

Furthermore, the psychology of the neurasthenic exhibits certain characteristic features of suggestion which will have to be more fully considered later, for their theoretical and practical consequences are of the first importance. It seems as if the neurasthenic wished to be sad, as if he craved for black ideas. Through the influence of the subconscious he is led unwittingly to seize upon anything which can supply his melancholy with

[1] The reader cannot guard too carefully against confounding voluntary effort with autosuggestion. We shall see that the latter is efficacious precisely in proportion as it is remote from the former.

some shadow of reason. In the newspaper he pounces on a paragraph recording a disaster. In his personal memories, he can recall only the gloomy days. He hunts down painful incidents as a beast hunts its prey. He does this, of course, without wishing to; and he does it all the more when he tries not to. In a word, everything happens as if a single goal were in prospect—to be sorrowful. Everything happens as if the subconscious were employing all possible artifices to attain this goal, were inventing all conceivable means to realize this end. At a later stage we shall analyze yet more striking examples of such teleology.

Our series of preliminary examples must be concluded with an account of *vertigo*. Coué writes on this subject: "Lay upon the ground a plank thirty feet long and nine inches wide. Everyone will be able to walk along this plank without putting a foot to the ground on either side. Now change the conditions of the experiment. Let the plank connect the twin towers of a cathedral, and tell me who will be able to walk for a yard along this narrow pathway. Do you think you will be able to? You could not make a couple of steps without beginning to tremble; and then, despite all your efforts of will, you would inevitably fall."[1]

This well-known phenomenon, a fall due to vertigo, is extremely instructive from the light it throws upon the emotional mechanism of spontaneous suggestion. The perception of the abyss beneath naturally arouses the idea of a possible fall. But often enough we think of a fall without falling. Why, in the present instance,

[1] Coué, De la suggestion et de ses applications. Barbier, Nancy, 1915, pp. 5 and 6.

does the idea of a fall become transformed into a fall? In other words, why does the suggestion realize itself?

Let us examine the matter introspectively. What difference do we find between the case when we think of a fall as we are walking at ease along the ground, and the case when the same thought comes to our minds on the top of a cathedral tower? The difference is that in the latter instance the idea of danger is inseparable from the idea of the fall. We are afraid. When we say this we lay a finger upon the crucial factor of *emotion,* which is the main cause of the majority of spontaneous suggestions. In the case now under consideration, the emotional factor is peculiarly conspicuous; but it is by no means absent from the suggestions previously considered. Obsessions and neurasthenia are sustained by a perpetual accompaniment of emotion, sometimes acute, sometimes massive; and they find an appropriate soil in persons of a highly emotional disposition.

Let us bear in mind, henceforward, this close tie between emotion and spontaneous suggestion. The attention which is the primary cause of spontaneous suggestion is an affective state, and is not purely intellectual. Spontaneous suggestion, like emotion, seizes us without our knowing why. In nothing are we more passive, more carried away despite ourselves. Vertigo is typical of such suggestions; and suggestion itself, in so far as it enters the realm of consciousness, is a sort of vertigo. In so far as it enters the realm of consciousness—this reservation is indispensable; for in many instances the process takes place in the sphere of the subconscious, and the subject is aware of the result alone.

CHAPTER THREE

REPRESENTATIVE SUGGESTIONS

(Images, Judgments, Hallucinations, Hallucination by Compromise and by Transfer)

In view of the practical and pedagogic aim of the present work, it is essential that we should make the reader understand the frequency of spontaneous suggestion. We shall give a great variety of examples, without multiplying them unduly.

These examples must not be presented in disorderly array. A simple classification is the following:

A. Instances belonging to the representative domain (sensations, mental images, dreams, visions, memories, opinions, and all intellectual phenomena);

B. Instances belonging to the affective domain (joy or sorrow, emotions, sentiments, tendencies, passions);

C. Instances belonging to the active or motor domain (actions, volitions, desires, gestures, movements at the periphery or in the interior of the body, functional or organic modifications).

Such is the classification we shall adopt. We shall see that in each of these domains, and in the most varied types of case, spontaneous suggestion is at work. For we say nothing intelligible if we confine ourselves to the abstract principle, "Every idea *tends* to undergo transformation into reality." Such a principle must be considered as nothing more than a convenient means for summarizing a large number of observations. To say that ideas "tend" to realize themselves, implies that in

some instances they realize themselves, whereas in some instances they fail to do so. If the formal phrase is to have a real content, we must show what ideas in actual fact are usually seen undergoing transformation into the corresponding realities. This is our immediate task.

In the representative domain, the fact of suggestion can be expressed by a formula which will at first seem a strange one, namely, *The idea*[1] *of an idea gives birth to this idea.*

As far as the motor domain is concerned, we shall say, *The idea of a movement gives birth to this movement.* This formula is comparatively easy to understand.

In the representative domain, we have to do with a sort of suggestion at second-hand. In this sense the matter is evidently somewhat complex. But from another outlook we are dealing with something simpler than when we enter the motor domain, for is it not more elementary to see an idea undergoing transformation into an idea, than to see an idea undergoing transformation into a movement or into an organic modification? In the former case we have the mind acting on itself. When we move on to study the action of the mind on the body, we feel as if we had passed a stage further, as if we had left the comparatively simple for the comparatively complex.

But what is the idea of an idea? Is it easy to distinguish the state "I think" from the state "I think that I think"? Spinoza[2] believed that the distinction could

[1] The term "idea" is used in the widest sense of "mental representation."

[2] Spinoza, Tractatus de intellectus emendatione. English translation by Hale White, Duckworth, London, 1899, p. 17.

be drawn, and he spoke of the idea of an idea, of the idea of the idea of an idea, and so on, as if they were realities he had seen with his very eyes. In truth this play with abstractions is somewhat artificial. Perhaps it is a mere playing with words; and we must look at the matter more concretely.

The idea of a movement, or let us say the image of a movement, can be clearly distinguished from the movement itself. The same thing can be affirmed of the image of any material object. Whereas the material object is visible to everyone, and forms part of the system of external realities, the image of this object exists only in the mind of the person who thinks that image. You see, just as I see, the house at which I am looking; but you do not see the house of my thought. In contrast with the object, we may say that the image is subjective.

But when the object itself is a mental state, and is therefore subjective, the distinction is no longer possible. Whereas the image of an external object is not an external object, and while being differentiated from the external object by this single characteristic may resemble it in all other respects—the image of a mental state, on the other hand, can be nothing but a mental state. It would seem, then, that we must accept one of two alternatives. Either this state-image has all the characteristics of the state of which it is the image, and in that case the former is not distinguishable from the latter, but is the very state itself. Or else, the former differs from the latter in some respect or other, and then the former is not the image of the latter.

But when we reason thus, we are, as so often happens, duped by our own dilemma. In fact, even if there do not exist, properly speaking, images of mental states,

there do exist equivalents of such images, and we may term them *schemata.*

We wish, for example, to recall a proper name. This name is a mental image. At the moment when we desire to recall it, we doubtless think of this name. Yet it would be incorrect to say that we possess its image, for then we should already possess the name itself. But we remember certain characteristics of the name, the number of syllables, the sound of certain letters, the initial or final consonant, the emotional atmosphere which is associated with it in our mind. We have a *schema* of the name. By the very fact that for a certain time our attention has been fixed upon this schema with the intention of filling in its details, we have started something at work within us. Now, while we are speaking of other things and when we no longer think of the name we require, this work is continued in the subconscious. Suddenly, in the depth of our memory, a call sounds, resembling a telephone bell when the connection we have been seeking is at length established—and the name is remembered.

By this example we may understand what suggestion is in the representative domain.

Amnesia, or loss of memory, may, just like the revival of memories, be the outcome of suggestion. Among hypnotists, it is a classical experiment to suggest to the subject that he has forgotten his own name. But hypnotism merely exhibits in an exaggerated form phenomena which occur in the normal state, and there is no essential difference between heterosuggestion and autosuggestion. There are names which we know as well as we know our own name, and yet they elude us just when we want

them. Often enough, this caprice of memory is very trying to the temper. "How ridiculous!" we say. We swear, we frown, we make desperate efforts to remember —but all in vain.

The failure to remember the item at the precise moment when it is wanted, is due to some specific cause, perhaps to some antecedent suggestion. Whatever the reason, since the name you want was perfectly familiar to you, you are astonished at the disobedience of your memory. The failure to recall what you want, the anomalous working of your brain, positively frightens you. Spontaneously and unconsciously you make an autosuggestion which aggravates the amnesia. And now, the greater the effort you make to remember the name, the more complete becomes the forgetfulness. You have noticed this before in similar instances. You are clearly aware that the harder you try to remember, the more obstinately do you forget. Each successive effort seems, as it were, to trouble more hopelessly the waters of memory, to stir up more mud from the bottom, until at length the whole pool has become turbid. "A moment ago, I had the name on the tip of my tongue, but now I have lost all trace of it." You had a schema in your mind; you tried to fill in the outline, but you feel that this very attempt has effaced the outline; and you feel that the more you try, the more hopeless becomes the obliteration.

But when you have ceased to struggle, when you have left your mind at rest, in the hope that the recollection will turn up later, then, after a while, the name comes back to you.

Moreover, it is not only upon isolated memories that suggestion acts in this way, negatively or positively. Memory as a whole may be similarly affected. In the

majority of amnesias, the part played by suggestion is enormous. We see this when amnesia is rapidly cured by a deliberate countersuggestion.

What, then, is the mechanism of such amnesias?

Let us suppose that two or three times in brief succession you have suffered from such a lapse of memory, accompanied on each occasion by more or less explicit annoyance. Then the idea takes possession of you that you are losing your memory. In actual fact, now, your memory is adversely affected, simply because you think it, and because your attention has thereby become concentrated upon the idea of amnesia.

In the domain of *judgments* and *opinions,* the rôle of spontaneous suggestion is often disastrous.

At the outset, let us clearly understand the nature of this kind of suggestion. What is the schema of opinion which undergoes transformation into a fixed opinion?

You hear an opinion stated; you are well aware that it is nothing more than an opinion; you have your reserves when you accept it; you intend to look into the matter more closely, to reason about it. At this stage you think the judgments that have been formulated, without believing them in the strict sense of the term. What you have in your mind are not complete judgments, for belief is an integral part of judgment, and here belief is lacking. All that you have is what we may call the "schema" of a judgment, the idea of a judgment (or of that series of judgments which constitutes an opinion).

Time passes, and you no longer think about verification. You even forget the original source of your idea.

But one day you are called upon to decide the question, and you discover that your mind is made up; you hold the very opinion which you heard expressed formerly, although you have never had any proof. The ordinary newspaper reader, the man-in-the-street, is continually circulating these "hearsays," without professing any credence in them. Nevertheless the newspaper reader's opinions are based upon the falsehoods he reads in his favourite paper. He does not realize it, but such is the fact. The grain planted in him when he read, has germinated in the subconscious. He has made up his mind, and he believes that his opinion is established upon reason. The ruling class turns this law skilfully to account when it wishes to drive the human "sheep of Panurge" to the slaughter house.

It is a well-known fact that by repeating tales to themselves and to others, people come to believe what they say, and are duped by their own falsehoods.

Next we pass to consider the rôle of suggestion in the domain of *sensation*. Let me quote some typical examples from Paul Emile Lévy's *l'Education rationelle de la volonté*.[1] Lévy was a pupil of Bernheim, and his book is transitional between the earlier Nancy school and the later. He alludes to an observation made upon himself by Herbert Spencer:

"If I merely think of a slate-pencil squeaking on a slate, my teeth are set on edge just as if I actually heard the sound."

Lévy refers to the familiar experience that merely to

[1] Paul Emile Lévy, The Rational Education of the Will, English translation from the 9th French edition by Florence K. Bright, Rider, London, 1913.

think of itching anywhere suffices to arouse the sensation of itching.

"Everyone knows," he adds, "that if we are expecting a visitor, we are continually hearing the door-bell ring before it really does so."

We may add that while suggestion can thus create wholly imaginary sensations (*hallucinations,* in fact), still more easily and still more frequently does it give rise to partial hallucinations by transforming real sensations to make them correspond to a fixed idea. From among our real sensations, we select those which conform most closely to the image preëxisting in our mind; between the sensation and the image there takes place a compromise, a more or less complete identification. Thus, when we are expecting a visitor, above all when we are awaiting his coming with some anxiety, the crackings of the wood in a piece of furniture or the blows of a hammer in the distance are mistaken by us for the sound of his footsteps on the stair.

In the visual domain, hallucination in the strict sense of the word is rarer than it is in the auditory domain. The difference doubtless depends upon the fact that the image of a noise is not absolutely contradicted by the sensation of a real noise, whereas a vision is often contradicted by the presence of the external objects amid which the vision seems to be situated. These objects then act as "antagonistic reducers," to use the term coined by Taine. I know perfectly well that two objects cannot occupy the same place at the same time, whereas two noises can mingle and interpenetrate. But even though complete hallucination be rare in the visual domain, what I propose to call *hallucination by compromise* is of fre-

quent occurrence. Phantoms make their appearance above all in the night, when the outlines of objects are comparatively hazy, so that their forms are more elastic to the imagination. A pillar, the white wraith of a fountain, the bright space between two trees—such things constitute the material substratum of a phantom, owing to the resemblance between their appearance and that of the imagined winding-sheet.

This phenomenon will be more readily understood when we contemplate its exaggeration in the state of hypnosis. In this condition, complete hallucination is by no means rare, but it is interesting to note that hallucination by compromise is often preferred by the subject. The imagination, instead of inventing out of whole cloth, makes use of elements borrowed from real sensations. This is an economy, an application of the law of least effort.

In this connection, let me record an experiment of my own.

I had induced hypnosis in a boy of twelve, who was extremely fond of chocolate éclairs. Giving him a plate to hold, I suggested that he should see in it a chocolate éclair. Now, on the plate was a reproduction of Millet's celebrated picture *The Gleaners*, in which there are three female figures, two bending forwards and one upright. After a second or two, the boy said in high glee: "But there are three chocolate éclairs, and two of them have an odd shape, for they are bent in the middle." This was a well-marked instance of hallucination by compromise.

The same type of hallucination, in a somewhat attenuated form, is commonly manifested in the work of great poets. Real objects are modified in form by the internal

visions they resemble, so that the real objects seem to be materializations of the visions. In Victor Hugo's writings, such direct metaphor is exceedingly common. Let me quote one example from among many.

The poet has just encountered a flock of sheep with a girl herding them. His thoughts have agreeably loitered in retrospective contemplation of this sight. Now his path leads him to the seashore, and here the surroundings seem modified to fit his reverie. Anyone who wishes fully to understand what passes in the poet's mind should (like the present writer) retrace Hugo's footsteps and read "Pasteurs et troupeaux"[1] in its original setting. The waves are breaking on Grouville beach. It is eventide and the full moon is about to rise upon the sea. The outlines of the landscape are ill-defined, and in the hypnotic atmosphere it is easy for the imagination to transfigure them. Leftward, the ruins of the castle of Montorgueil thrust like a human head above the promontory which juts southward into the sea at the northern extremity of the bay. The vision of the flock has lingered in the poet's mind.

Down there before me the pensive old watchman,
Guarding the seafoam, the tides, the seaweed, the reef,
And the surges beating ceaselessly upon the shore,
The shepherd headland, wearing a cap of cloud-drift,
Leaning on elbows, dreams to the murmur of all the infinites,
And contemplates the triumphant rising of the moon
Amid the wraithlike forms of glorious cloud,
While the darkness trembles, and the biting squall,
Scatters to the winds, with its fierce breath,
The wool of the sinister ocean sheep.

Elsewhere the poet, burning with indignation at the

[1] Les Contemplations.

memory of an execution which continues to haunt his thoughts, seeing the moon rise red and sanguine, writes: "I saw this severed head roll on the ground."[1] But the same moon, one evening when he is engaged in religious meditation, becomes "a huge consecrated wafer." Another night, when he is in a similar mood, he refers to the stars as "fragments of white-hot charcoal scattered from the censer of the infinite"; again, in a burst of lyrical enthusiasm, he speaks of the stars as "sparks which flash beneath the hoofs of Pegasus"; whilst on a night of pessimism the constellations are "the marks of the prison-house stamped on the world's shoulder." This enumeration could readily be prolonged.

Hallucination by compromise is a good example of the law of teleology which dominates suggestion, a law to which reference has already been made in connection with neurasthenia. The internal image which wishes to realize itself in the form of sensation is opposed by antagonistic reducers which are real sensations; but it transforms these obstacles into aids; subconsciously, it chooses from among them those which it can best turn to account, those which can serve it as material; and upon this material it stamps its own impress. This is obvious in Hugo's "ocean sheep." In the case of the "white-hot charcoal from the censer," and in that of the "consecrated wafer," the process is somewhat different. We cannot say that the image of the censer, or that of the host, existed in the poet's mind in a conscious form; what he was conscious of was an affective state, the state of religious contemplation. The image of the host, the image of the censer, etc., were associated with this state in the subconscious; they were "preconscious," were,

[1] Les Châtiments.

that is to say, quite ready to rise to the surface; the sight of a real object called them up by resemblance. The case of the "severed head" was of a type intermediate between those just analyzed. The poet's mind was mastered by an affective state, wherein rage and pity were combined. But with this state there were intermingled images which passed one after another through consciousness: the guillotine, the condemned man, his aspect, the waiting crowd, and so on. Among these images was that of the severed head. It had flashed through consciousness, several times perhaps; and when not actually present to consciousness it had remained in the preconscious, intimately associated with the dominant affective state.

We lay stress upon these examples, for they supply an answer to an obvious objection, and they are instances of the working of the remarkable law of *transference*.

Suggestion is an idea which, subconsciously, transforms itself into the corresponding reality. But in that case, we shall be told, a hallucination could only be a suggestion when the subject has been expecting it, when he has already had the mental image whereof the hallucination gives him a quasi-material sensation. Nay, more, his mind must have been positively obsessed, his attention must have been monopolized by this mental image. Now, the majority of persons who suffer from hallucinations insist that their "voices" or their "visions" take them entirely unawares, come unexpectedly out of the void, startling the imagination and often producing actual dismay. Here, it would seem at first sight, there can be no question of suggestion, seeing that the first of the three phases, the preliminary idea of the thing realized, is lacking.

In exceptional instances, this objection may be valid, or must be admitted as a logical possibility; but far more often it can be refuted by careful observation. The examples given above furnish the key for the refutation of the criticism.

In the case of the severed head, and still more in those of the host and of the censer, it was not the mental image of these things which engrossed the attention at the outset; the attention was already engrossed, as it is in the origination of every suggestion. The obsession was there, but it was obsession by an affective state, not by an image. Nevertheless, in the poet's subconsciousness, the image was closely associated with this affective state. (In early youth, his only experience of religious contemplation had been gained in Catholic churches, and in connection with the host and with censers.) By the chance play of objective sensations, these slumbering images, so intimately related to his actual state of mind, were reawakened. Thereafter, everything happened as if the obsession had been transferred from the affective state to the image so closely associated with that state, the image which symbolized that state, so that by spontaneous suggestion the image was then realized in hallucinatory form.

This transference is a further manifestation of the teleology of the subconscious. [Every state which engrosses the mind, tends in one way or another to secure external expression, for it is a concentrated energy which wishes to diffuse itself.] Now for Victor Hugo, hallucination by compromise, which in him is the source of symbolical poetry, is the normal method of discharge. But an affective state cannot thus be externalized. We

cannot visualize religious contemplation; we cannot visualize wrath. The obsession, therefore, is transferred. A visible object, a symbol (the censer, the severed head), is substituted for the unduly abstract emotional object, and the suggestion then runs its course.

These examples of hallucination by compromise will enable the reader to gain a clear understanding of the process of transference, which appears to be the general law governing all hallucinations of such a character. A neuropath for whom all the stones in the road become pustules, for whom every rumnel of water is a loathsome issue of some morbid humour, may not be directly obsessed by such images; but he is manifestly obsessed by ideas, by fears, of disease and of decomposition. These ideas and fears are too abstract to be externalized, and they are therefore replaced by the concrete visions which are associated with them.

The law of transference is likewise in operation in the origination of certain complete hallucinations. In the preceding instances, the immediate cause of the transference was to be found in the chance working of external circumstances, of real sensations. But in other instances the entire process is internal. Transference has been carefully studied by the psychoanalysts, and they have shown that it may result from a number of subconscious influences, and above all from the working of repression.[1] The analysis of a case of hallucination reported by Auguste Lemaître[2] will enable us to understand the genesis of hallucination by repression. We see in it an example

[1] Cf. Régis and Hesnard, Psychoanalyse des névroses et des psychoses, Alcan, Paris.

[2] "Archives de Psychologie," July, 1916, Kundig, Geneva.

of suggestion in which both the first phase and the second phase remain in the sphere of the subconscious. But the process is none the less complete. Here is the history of the case:

"Amédée was a boy of fifteen. During the Easter holidays he was in a mountain region, and after he had been there two weeks he became suddenly subject to hallucinations. He was an intelligent lad with more inclination for study than for out-of-door amusements; but for health reasons he somewhat reluctantly devoted himself to these latter for an hour or so daily. His environment was one of kindliness, but he was far from sharing the luxurious tastes of his family. In fact, he felt himself out of place in these surroundings. The commonplaceness of everyday life, even when richly gilded, had for a year past, since he had begun to think, filled him with aversion. He had grown more and more depressed. During the above-mentioned visit to the mountains, when his parents said to him, 'You'd much better go out tobogganing, instead of frowsting over your books!' this remonstrance caused him a violent internal shock. His own words to me were: 'They used to treat me as if I were an imbecile; they said I looked like a lunatic or an embryo philosopher. And all because, during the evenings in the hotel, I did not want to dance or to play the fool with the others.'

"In Amédée's family there was no history of neuropathic taint, except that one of his uncles had been a sleep-walker. The patient himself, when about twelve years of age, had on two or three occasions walked in his sleep.

"The hallucinations, as I have said, began towards the close of his stay in the mountain resort. Both the

visual and the auditory hallucinations had a characteristic which caused him great astonishment; they were *fragmented.*

"Here is his own account of them: 'Often, while at work or while talking with someone, I suddenly cease to see the persons with whom I am conversing, and the other objects around me; I am plunged into a dream or vision. Frequently I see a woman who is tall and elegantly formed, dressed in white, seated at a table and leaning on one elbow. On the table there is a lighted lamp. She is looking out of the window, and is patting a dog, which has no hair and no legs. Of this woman I see only the head and arms and the upper part of the trunk, and, lower down, the crossed legs.'

"As a rule, the hallucination affects him in the evening. On May 8th, at 6:30 P. M., 'I felt a hand stroking my cheek, and it seemed to me that I must be going mad.' On May 13th, at about 7:30 P. M., 'I saw a woman who had no arms, and who was turning her head from side to side.' "

The history refers to other hallucinations which we need not describe, for the report is not sufficiently detailed to enable us to make a satisfactory analysis. All these hallucinations were fragmented; from the utterance of the "voices" certain words were missing; moreover, the author lays stress on the hours at which the phenomena occurred (4:30, 6:30, 7:30)—the very times were not integers. His inference is that all these hallucinations related to the sentiment of incompleteness with which the lad was affected. They symbolized this feeling, which was transferred to the symbolical images.

But the few hallucinations which we have selected from among all those recorded in the clinical history,

enable us to undertake a more exhaustive study, employing the psychoanalytic method.

The patient's age and the nature of the visions combine to show that their cause was deeply rooted in the domain of sex. Moreover, in the boy's detestation of luxurious living, of dancing, etc., psychoanalysis discloses to us the results of a repression of sexual matters.[1] He refuses to admit the existence within him of certain desires. The very images habitually associated with these desires are repressed by the endopsychic censor; and it is to these associated images that the affective obsession is transferred. Note more particularly that, in the visions, the more significant portions of the body are systematically suppressed. All this work of substitution has been effected in the subconscious. The upper consciousness is unaware of what has been going on in the depths; it is astonished, and sometimes alarmed, at the results of the process.

Hallucinatory suggestion (except hallucination by compromise) is rare in adults. But in children it is fairly common.

I can myself recall having seen, in childhood, a vision of bells flying through the air, ringing as they flew. It was on the Saturday before Easter, and these bells were bringing from Rome the greatly desired Easter eggs.

George Sand and Carl Spitteler have recorded memories of childhood displaying analogous phenomena, more or less strongly marked. It is probable that as we become more intimately acquainted with the psychic life

[1] Cf. Baudouin, Psychoanalyse, Observation No. 2. "Archives de Psychologie," 1916, Kundig, Geneva.

of children, we shall discover that spontaneous suggestions of this kind are far from rare.

Finally, an idea may not only induce sensation; it may also inhibit sensation. Thus, a person suffering from a severe cold, being no longer able to perceive a faint odour, will imagine that the sense of smell has been totally lost, and will in actual fact be unable to smell anything.

CHAPTER FOUR

AFFECTIVE SUGGESTIONS

(Sensations, Emotions, the Peripheral Theory of Emotion)

As we pass from the representative sphere to the affective sphere, sensations provide us with a natural stepping-stone. As a general rule, sensations are simultaneously affective and representative. Certain sensations of heat and cold, and to a still greater degree certain visceral sensations, are often attended with pain which may preponderate very markedly over the representative element.

The idea of a sensation of pleasure or pain, the idea of a feeling, tends to become this pleasure, this pain, or this feeling.

Here, again, we have to point out that such an idea is rather a schema than an image properly so called. When we think of a pain, we feel (unless our representation be purely verbal) a sort of reduced copy of the pain, as if we had only just experienced it, and as if a faint trace of it, a vague emotional echo of it, still remained. The vividness of this echo varies in different persons. There are some who, directly they hear any physical suffering spoken of, promptly display upon their faces the customary signs of pain. The forehead becomes furrowed, the corners of the mouth are spasmodically raised. This

implies that one who thinks of a pain, begins to feel it, has already a rough sketch of it in his sensorium. If, now, the attention becomes unduly concentrated upon this sketch, this schema, or if the attention returns to it too often, suggestion is unleashed. The same considerations apply to every kind of affective state.

As far as visceral sensations are concerned, Herbert Parkyn, in his excellent manual of autosuggestion,[1] records the following incident. It has its amusing side, so that it sticks in the memory.

"A New York visitor in Chicago looks at his watch, which is set an hour ahead of Chicago time, and tells a Chicago friend that it is twelve o'clock. The Chicago friend, not considering the difference in time between Chicago and New York, tells the New Yorker that he is hungry and that he must go to lunch. Twelve o'clock is the Chicago man's regular lunch hour, and the mere mention of twelve o'clock is sufficient to arouse his appetite" (pp. 11–12).

Suggestion may also act negatively. Bernheim maintains that in fasting men the sensation of hunger is neutralized by an idea.

Phenomena of this character occur in connection with all kinds of sensation.

Parkyn reminds us that a man, after touching some article of clothing, may be told that it has been worn by someone suffering from skin disease. The subject thereupon has itching sensations all over the body, and fancies he has caught the disease. Again, medical students who study the symptoms of various diseases frequently exhibit these symptoms and imagine themselves to suffer from the diseases in question. Facts of this order are

[1] Herbert Parkyn, Auto-Suggestion, Fowler, London, 1916.

quite familiar. The pamphlets, leaflets, and advertisements issued by the vendors of patent medicines vaunting specifics for all and sundry diseases whose symptoms are described with a wealth of detail, are responsible for an enormous amount of suffering.

Paul Emile Lévy lays great stress upon negative suggestions, those which inhibit sensation; and he is right, for the deliberate use of suggestions of this character is most valuable in promoting the relief of various painful symptoms. Here is an instance given by this author:[1]

"The following fact came under my observation: A patient complained of a severe pain, the sequel of a violent blow on the chest. His temperature was taken with a clinical thermometer, and when the instrument was withdrawn he said: 'That has eased me greatly!'— Other authors have recorded precisely similar occurrences. Many martyrs have endured torture with a serenity of spirit which, they assure us, they were able to maintain without the smallest difficulty. Their attention was monopolized by the beatific visions with which their ecstatic minds were filled, so that they were unaware of physical suffering."

The painful sensation of cold (which is simultaneously representative and affective) may be to a large extent neutralized by suggestion. On the other hand, it may be greatly intensified by the same cause.

A resident in Nancy, one who has since learned to make good use of autosuggestion, reported to me the following incident:

"When I got out of bed one morning the window was wide open and the sun was shining brightly. The mere sight of the sun made me feel cheerful and warm. I put

[1] Op. cit.

on very light clothing and went about my business with bare arms, and nevertheless felt a great deal warmer than I had felt during the last few days. Then I went to the window and saw that it had been snowing. A glance at the thermometer convinced me that the winter had set in. Immediately I felt cold; my teeth chattered and I began to shiver."

Thus the sun had induced the idea of warmth, and had even sufficed to arouse the sensation of warmth, or at least to neutralize the sensation of cold. But the sight of the snow in conjunction with the reading of the thermometer aroused the idea of cold, and the sensation of cold promptly ensued.

Everyone knows, though not everyone fully realizes, how the sight of a fire which has just been lighted, and which has not yet begun to throw out any heat, will make us feel warm, thanks to the idea of heat which it arouses by a natural association. In a child, the memory of having suffered greatly from cold one day in the previous winter will arouse a dread of winter, and all the more if, in answer to the child's question, "What is winter?" we have foolishly answered, "Winter is the season when we suffer from cold." Such a child will be "a chilly mortal" throughout life, or at least until he has realized that he has been a victim of suggestion. It may be that some countersuggestion, like the amulet or talisman in a fairy tale, will deliver him from his thraldom. In like manner, one who has never before been sensitive to cold, will become so during a fever and will remain so after the fever, when the exciting cause of the chilliness has vanished. Similar factors are at work in the case of persons who declare they cannot endure heat.

The sensation of weight and the fatigue that accom-

panies it, and also the fatigue which comes from walking or from any other form of exercise, are the sport of unceasing suggestions. This is particularly noticeable in the case of children. If, when you are out walking with a child, you are so heedless as to say you are tired, it is ten to one that the child will say "So am I," and will immediately begin to flag and to fall behind. But in this respect we grown-ups resemble children much more than we are apt to fancy. A peasant, carrying a basket on his back, will stoop under its weight although he has unwittingly dropped the contents on the road. When, during a walk of two or three miles, we are dull and imagine ourselves to have traversed double the distance, we are correspondingly fatigued. But the reverse is equally true, and this latter fact is susceptible of the most valuable practical applications.

As far as concerns physical pain in general, suggestion will sometimes intensify it, and will sometimes act as an anæsthetic. Coué gives the following familiar instance:

"Consider, for example, a little child. He has pinched his finger or scratched his hand. Instinctively he begins to cry, for the pain is more or less sharp. His mother runs to him, blows on his hand, rubs the sore place gently, tells him it is all over now and that it doesn't hurt any more. Thereupon the child stops crying and begins to smile. Wherefore? The child hears his mother say, 'It doesn't hurt now.' His unconscious believes it. He imagines that there is no more pain, and actually he ceases to feel the pain.

"But if the mother, greatly alarmed, exclaims: 'Poor little darling, how you have hurt yourself!' the child

redoubles his outcries. In this case, likewise, the child's unconscious believes the mother's words. The idea that the suffering is great, increases the suffering.''

The reader may object that this example, and also that of the child which gets tired on hearing someone else complain of being tired, have nothing to do with the subject under discussion, seeing that they are hetero-suggestions. But comparison with the adjoining instances will show that the parent's words act only by way of the child's imagination, and become suggestions only after they have been accepted by the child.

Besides, in this case as well, we may say that we grown-ups are more childlike than we suppose. We shall learn that suggestion consciously utilized by the adult may become a potent anæsthetic. But so long as we remain ignorant of this, our trouble is that we are just as credulous as any child, with the difference that we are credulous in a bad sense while the child is credulous in a good sense. He believes that his mother's blowing on the sore place eases the pain; and inasmuch as he believes it, it is true. For our part, we believe that we can only get relief by having recourse to a pharmaceutical arsenal; and as long as we believe this, as long as we remain ignorant of the power possessed by the brain over the rest of the organism, so long does our belief remain true, so long are we unable to do without the arsenal. But, per se, our negative superstition is a trifle more fallacious than the positive superstition of the child.

It suffices for us to imagine ourselves poisoned by fungi; thereupon we are seized with violent colic. In this and in similar cases, we manifestly encounter two

important factors of suggestion: *emotion* (fear, in the instance just given) and *attention*. The latter is sustained to the pitch of obsession, and is kept up by emotion.

But *emotion* (the acute affective state) is not merely a factor of suggestion, not merely an auxiliary in the production of suggestions. It may in its turn be the object of a suggestion, and the idea of an emotion frequently gives rise to this emotion.

Nothing predisposes to fear like the conviction that we shall be afraid, and, above all, the conviction that we shall be afraid in certain specific conditions. Nothing predisposes to anger like the memory of a previous occasion when our anger passed beyond our control, and the more or less conscious realization that the same thing will inevitably happen should the same conditions recur.

But the idea, the schema, of an emotion is not necessarily a purely internal state. In contradistinction to what occurs in the case of movements, which are externalized phenomena although their image is purely mental, it frequently happens that emotion, an internal state, has external objects for its image, its schema. I refer to the physical signs which are the habitual accompaniments of emotion, which are its expression, and which arouse it. Those who see in another the signs of fear; those who discern in their companions pallor of the face, a terror-stricken look in the eyes, a trembling of the limbs; those who hear others stammer with fright, or who in a crowd hear the panic-stricken cry, "All's lost, every man for himself!"—are not slow to become affected with the highly contagious emotion of fear.

Thus the collective fear which we term panic rapidly spreads through an assembly, an army, a country.

According to what is known as the *peripheral theory of the emotions,* which derives from Lange and William James, it is an error to believe that emotion secures expression through physical signs. These psychologists hold, on the contrary, that the physical signs are the actual cause of the emotion. We ought not, they contend, to say: "We weep because we are sad; we tremble because we are afraid; we clench our fists because we are angry." We ought to say: "We are sad because we weep; we are afraid because we tremble"; and so on. Were this theory sound, the foregoing suggestion would have to be classed, not as an emotional suggestion, but as a motor suggestion. The sight of the movements which express fear in others would have suggested analogous movements to the subject; and these movements, by a natural sequence, would then have aroused in him the emotion which is invariably associated with such movements.

Against this interpretation, it may be objected that as a rule the motor suggestions induced by the sight of others' movements do not operate with the requisite degree of intensity. If we imitate the movements of persons who are afraid, why do not we likewise imitate the contortions of acrobats, persons whom we usually watch with close attention? Does not the difference show clearly that in the production of fear there is some other influence at work? It is true that those who accept the views of William James might reply as follows: The sight of the movements expressive of fear suggests at the outset the same movements to us, in an infinitesimal manner, as in the case of all movements which we

witness. But in this case the beginnings of movement at the periphery involve the beginnings of the emotion of fear. This emotion, like all others, makes suggestion more active, and redoubles the intensity of the movements; these, in turn, increase the intensity of the emotion; and so on. It is as if we had to do with a self-starting, self-exciting dynamo; the current and the magnification mutually increase one another, and both speedily attain to a maximum.

There is some force in the answer. Moreover, it is true that there are other facts, still within the field of suggestion, which seem to speak in favour of James's theory. For example, the most potent method of overcoming fear by induced suggestion would appear to be for the suggester to direct his attention, not to the fear itself, but to the accompanying movements.

A boy of twelve had from earliest childhood evinced a positive phobia of toads. Whenever he caught sight of one, his face grew pale, his back became arched, and he made convulsive movements with the forearms. This phobia had originated in imitation of his mother, who had similarly derived it imitatively from her mother. Ascending through the generations, the symptoms were more violent. The grandmother had a severe nervous paroxysm at the sight of a toad, falling convulsed to the ground. In her case, too, the trouble came by imitation. Her mother, in a deathbed delirium, witnessed by the daughter, had been affected with the hallucination that toads were crawling all over her body. In treating the boy, I dealt with the motor symptoms, saying, "You will no longer arch your back at sight of a toad," etc. After three sittings at which these suggestions were made in the waking state, the phobia had disappeared.

It seemed as if, by stopping the movements expressive of fear, I had actually dealt with the cause of the fear.

But the opponents of the peripheral theory will not admit defeat. They can raise two valid objections:

1. We know that suggestion acts through teleology; we know that when the end is proposed, the subconscious finds means for the attainment of this end, discovers methods for its realization. The emotion, therefore, can perfectly well be the cause of the movements.[1]

2. The case given as an example shows that the phobia was the outcome of imitation, was derived from a suggestion aroused by the sight of the movements expressive of fear. In an emotion suggested in this manner, it is quite possible that the movements in question play a preponderant part; but it does not follow that all emotions are explicable in the same way.

To sum up, the phenomena of suggestion have not, as yet, enabled us to solve the problem definitively. But we shall clear the issues if we juxtapose the problem of the *emotions* with the problem of *affective sensations*, which has already been studied.

Emotion, which in greater or less degree always underlies joy or sorrow, is obviously a phenomenon belonging to the same psychological category as affective sensation—for instance, the painful sensation of weight, of fatigue, or of cold.

Now when we study affective sensations, we perceive that their motor accompaniments play a secondary part, and cannot be considered as their cause. On the other

[1] The reader is referred to the example given at the beginning of Chapter VIII, Part I (the law of subconscious teleology), where an affective state (astonishment) is used as a means for realizing a motor suggestion (the crossing of the arms).

hand, these sensations can be suggested, just as emotions can be suggested, by external things which symbolize them, by external things which are not always movements. To shrivel up at the thought of cold, to utter a guttural "grrr!" are excellent ways of making oneself feel chilly when it is really quite warm. The practice of muffling oneself up is a no less efficacious means, for, even before we hamper the circulation by this practice, we thus arouse the idea that the cold is a terrible enemy, is a sort of polar bear from which we must protect ourselves by elaborate special equipment. Winter, rigged out and solemnized in this manner, exercises upon our minds a suggestion analogous to that which Pascal discerned in the ceremonial robes of the doctors and of all the high dignitaries of his day. Nevertheless, the sensation of cold is not *caused* by these trappings, nor yet by our shrinking from the cold and by the chattering of our teeth. The thermic sense is modelled after the same manner as the other senses. We should be wrong to imagine that the sensations of heat and cold differ fundamentally in the way they function from the sensations of sight and hearing, which latter are obviously not the outcome of any bodily movements. But it is perfectly true that the movements we make when we shrivel up or curl up [1] from cold, the movements we make when our teeth chatter, being intimately associated with the sensation of cold, prolonging and expressing that sensation, arouse it and tend to suggest it, or to amplify it by suggestion if it already exists.

[1] This gesture, an ancestral heritage, appears to be the vestige of an effective means of defence against cold. But in the conditions under which we now live, it is unmeaning, and serves only to suggest the sensation of cold.

By analogy we may infer with a high degree of probability that the same is true of the emotions, that it is true of fear for example. I cannot think that fear, in its essential nature, is caused by the motor disturbances which are its accompaniments.[1] But as soon as these disturbances begin, they suggest to us the fear they symbolize. This gives a plausible foundation for the peripheral theory, and there can be no doubt that a large part of the emotion we feel is caused by suggestions of this character. Herein we discover additional proof of the important rôle of suggestion in such cases.

This rôle need not surprise us. As we have repeatedly had occasion to recognize, emotion favours and powerfully reinforces suggestion. Now, when the object of suggestion is emotion itself, this emotion which we do not begin to feel until we think about it, is nevertheless present from the outset in an attenuated form, and endures throughout the motor process. It never ceases to render the motor process more active. Suggestion, here, is in a peculiarly favourable position.

What we have just said concerning the rôle of motor expression in the suggestion of such emotions as fear and anger, and in the suggestion of such a sensation as cold, enables us at this stage to formulate a practical rule. In the case of fear or anger, we should repress the movements characteristic of these emotions, and should cultivate physical impassibility. In the case of cold, we should adopt an upright and offensive attitude, instead of a curled up and defensive or shivery attitude; we should do this directly we begin to feel, and even before we begin to feel, cold. In view of the power of sug-

[1] The emotion remains peripheral, in this sense, that it usually originates in external sensations.

gestion in this field, such a veto imposed at the outset upon an impending suggestion is of greater importance than anyone could imagine who had not made personal trial of the method.[1]

[1] Concerning the suggestion of emotions by their motor expression, Pierre Bovet writes as follows (L'instinct combatif Délachaux and Niestlé, Neuchâtel, 1917): "Emotion spreads by inducing the imitative reproduction of the gestures which express emotion. This enables us to understand why emotion spreads more readily in proportion as it is more violent, and why a crowd so readily becomes affected with a paroxysm of emotion."

CHAPTER FIVE

AFFECTIVE SUGGESTIONS
(*continued*)

(*Sentiments, Tendencies, Passions*)

Suggestion also plays a great part in the life of *sentiment*. By its nature, sentiment is akin to emotion, being differentiated therefrom by its less abrupt and comparatively stable character. Sentiment is more inward than emotion; physical changes are less in evidence; consequently, it is easier to feign a sentiment like love or hate, than to feign an emotion like anger.

A sentiment, like an image, is characteristically internal. As in the case of the image, therefore, it is peculiarly true that the idea of a sentiment is already the sentiment. This applies even more fully to sentiments than to images (at any rate to visual and auditory images, which are the chief images). The mental image of an object seen or of a word heard is, in fact, susceptible of analysis into parts. Thus the idea of an image may be conceived as consisting of certain salient parts of the image, whereas other parts are wanting; this is what we have termed a "schema." But the idea of fragmentation must not be taken too literally. The simplification which leads to the formation of the schema resembles the simplification that occurs in the view of an object when we see it from a greater distance. It is as if, as we move away, the object loses one detail after another.[1] The idea or schema of an image differs from

[1] Bergson's analysis has shown how artificial is our conception of mental phenomena as fragmented, as atomized.

that image as the object seen at a distance differs from the same object viewed close at hand. Many of the details are somewhat blurred; only in the case of a few salient details are the outlines still discernible. Thus, in the case of a person's name, we referred to the sound of certain consonants, to the number of the letters, etc., as elements making up the schema. The schema differs from the complete image in that certain of the constituent parts of the image are lacking in the schema.

In the case of the sentiment, there is a difference. The sentiment is synthetic; if we explain it, if we analyze it, it loses thereby its primary essence. "If we reason about love, we destroy love," writes Tolstoi. Speaking generally, the application to sentiment of intellectual processes (which are by nature analytical) is destructive to sentiment. For sentiment is non-analytical; it is not made up of parts; it is an indivisible whole, and you have to take it or leave it. It follows that the idea of a sentiment cannot be the partial revival of the sentiment. The difference between the sentiment and the idea of the sentiment cannot be a difference of kind; it can merely be a difference of degree, of intensity.

This implies that when we think of a sentiment we do, in the strict sense of the term, begin to feel it.

In these conditions, suggestion is exceptionally easy. When the idea of a sentiment lingers in the mind, when our attention continually recurs to it, we may look upon our idea as a command, as a prophecy; and it is probable that, in the end, the sentiment will manifest itself in full vigour. The fact that we call it up, indicates that it is already there. We are reminded of the profound saying of Pascal: "You would not have sought me had you not already found me."

Nevertheless, it is by insensible degrees that we pass from emotion to sentiment. Despite its inwardness, a sentiment is accompanied by physical disturbance, which is less conspicuous than that which accompanies emotion, but is no less real. This disturbance, likewise, is externalized in gesture and in speech.

It is a commonplace to say that to give expression to a sentiment, above all to a painful sentiment, is a relief. The term "expression" here partially regains its literal sense. When we squeeze a wet sponge, we express water from it, we get rid of the excess. Some go so far as to declare that sentiment can destroy itself through securing expression. Goethe tells us that by writing *Werther* he freed himself from a suicidal impulse. In truth, however, there is something more at work here than the mere fact of expression. There is an imaginary gratification of desire, analogous to the satisfaction that our repressed impulses secure in dreams. (The writer of *Werther,* affected with a suicidal impulse, killed himself in imagination.) When the expression of a sentiment gives relief, a similar mechanism may often be at work.

I have known persons who, when morally wounded by another, immediately responded by invective and insult (sometimes in all seriousness, and sometimes in a tone of assumed pleasantry, but through which anger breathed). They declared that did they fail to give vent to their feelings, they would bottle something up, and they did not wish to retain any rancour towards one dear to them. Here, again, the rancour has been discharged through finding indirect satisfaction, through securing a derivative.

It may also be contended that the expression of a moral smart gives relief, not per se, but through the

satisfaction it gives us to gain a hearing, and to find sympathizers.

Possibly, again, when a sentiment reaches paroxysmal intensity, its expression is a discharge of tension, as when Ariadne bewails Theseus and proclaims her woes to the winds and the waves, or as when Victor Hugo declaims to the waves on the Jersey coast his anger towards and his hatred for the man of the Second of December.[1]

In these cases too, however, I believe that what gives relief is not the mere fact of expression, but the discharge, the indirect satisfaction. We address things and animals while personifying them, imagining for the moment that they can understand us. Except for the poetic terminology, Ariadne does not differ essentially from the old maid who confides in her cat, thus gratifying her need for sympathy. Victor Hugo sublimates his rancour and his desire for vengeance. He writes *Les Châtiments*, since he cannot, and indeed would not, chastise in reality. Ariadne, having lost the object of her love, substitutes the sea for this object. In like manner Hugo substitutes the sea for the object of his hatred:

Besides, gloomy ocean, I hate thee.[2]

In a word, it would seem that the fact of expression does not in itself constitute the discharge, but that it

[1] 1851, the coup d'état of Louis Napoleon—TRANSLATORS' NOTE.

[2] A classical instance of transferred emotion. The sea is associated in his mind with the prison-ships on which those condemned after the coup d'état were transported to Cayenne. The sea has become the accomplice, the "handmaiden," of the detested ruler, and is therefore substituted for him as the object of hate.

acts in virtue of some external cause which is intermingled with the expression (sympathy, derivation).

On the other hand, the expression of a sentiment, like the expression of an emotion, seems to be by its very nature eminently suggestive, not merely for others, but for the subject himself. According to Pascal, one who takes holy water and makes the sign of the cross will not fail in the end to become a believer.

We shall discuss later the rôle of art, but we may enquire here whether it be not the function of art to suggest sentiments by giving them expression. Furthermore (conversely with what happened in the case of the author of *Werther*), it is obvious that in many instances the artist intensifies his own sentiment by the mere fact of expressing it. A poem is begun in a comparatively indifferent emotional state, but by the time he reaches the third or fourth stanza the writer's eyes are moist. Sometimes the opening stanzas will merely have served to suggest a livelier sentiment to the author, and in the final revision of the poem they will be suppressed because they seem weak and spiritless in comparison with those that follow—although they paved the way for these. The musician's "prelude," the painter's "study," have a similar preparatory rôle. Sometimes, when the work of expression is finished, it comes to exercise the strongest suggestive power on the writer.

> There are verses of mine which I wrote without weeping,
> Yet now, on rereading, they move me to tears.

We are told that Nietzsche, rereading his own *Zarathustra,* was so strongly moved that he was unable to finish the book.

The domain of art furnishes us with other examples

of spontaneous suggestion. I refer to the suggestions which control public appreciation, whether favourable or unfavourable. People are guided by the critics, by fashion, by the comments of the catalogue they glance at in front of every picture to learn what they ought to feel about it. Quite common is a horror of anything that is new in style, a dislike for any work that has not been consecrated as a masterpiece. But when this consecration has taken place, people will admire with a fervour equal to that with which they have previously despised. In others we observe a tendency to rush after every novelty, a fondness for the ultrafuturist. Thus some find a work beautiful and touching in proportion as it is in conformity with the established canons and is like everything else, whilst others admire a work and are moved by it in proportion as it is unlike everything else. And, apart from a few humbugs, the public is in either case perfectly sincere.

There have been epidemics of despair, epidemics of suicide. But another thing which shows clearly the extent to which sentiments are spread by suggestion, and the way in which they affect human collectivities, is the existence of a typical sentimentalism in each epoch. When a sentiment is genuinely original, when it is the true reflection of the individual's personal reactions, it naturally differs in persons of different temperaments. On the other hand, to-day no less than in former times, similar varieties of temperament must exist, and these must react in similar ways. But human beings living in intimate association react in an almost uniform manner, and the general manifestations of sentiment differ from age to age. Romanticism was a collective crisis; it dominated sentiment for many years, and then gave

place to a new type of feeling. Such phenomena are not wholly explicable by historical happenings, or by changes in social conditions. We must rather say that the sensibility of one person, or of a few, arouses widespread suggestive imitation; and it has often been pointed out that the whole romanticist movement existed by anticipation in Rousseau. In like manner the sensibility of our own epoch, in certain circles at least, is the outcome of strong doses of Nietzschean suggestion—more or less distorted. We do not allege that everything can be explained by suggestion. We merely wish to reveal its presence and to demonstrate its power. Why is one model chosen in preference to another? The reasons for such a preference are doubtless complex; but as far as the present argument is concerned the important point is that people do choose a model, and imitate that model without fully realizing that they are doing so. As Bernheim phrased it: "Suggestion is not everything; but in everything there is an element of suggestion."

From sentiments we naturally pass to *tendencies* which, under the form of tastes, inclinations, and passions, constitute, as Ribot has shown, the mainspring of the affective life, and form the ultimate foundation of the sentiments themselves.

There are a few primordial tendencies, and the function of the chief of these is to favour the preservation of the individual or the species. Suggestion plays its part, sometimes in inhibiting these primitive tendencies, but more often in accentuating them; it also promotes the development of secondary tendencies grafted upon the primary ones.

The instinct of self-preservation is displayed in a

number of tendencies, the chief of which is the nutritive impulse. We have seen that this impulse is inhibited in fasting men. But sometimes it is accentuated by suggestion. A person was told one day that his appetite was immoderate, and that he must certainly have a tapeworm; aware, henceforward, of the voracity of the imaginary tapeworm, his consumption of food, already twice that of an ordinary mortal, was now fourfold.

In this field, an example of secondary tendencies is furnished by the preferences we show for certain foods, and the dislike we feel for others. Some of these tastes are natural manifestations of individual temperaments; but most of them are simply due to suggestion, and are all the more imperious on that account. The subject declares he cannot overcome his like or his dislike; and he is in fact enslaved by it precisely in proportion to the degree to which he believes himself enslaved—but no more. He "can't bear the smell" of a particular spice, and yet he will go into ecstasies over the flavour of a sauce containing this very spice, when he does not know it is one of the ingredients.

How do we form our tastes as a rule? Let us remember, first of all, that we generally form them in early childhood, the preëminently suggestible age, when we see flying bells (see p. 62), and when our mother's breath will cure a pain. Just as in the case of the boy in whom a terror of toads was aroused by imitation, it will be enough for a child to see an adult display disgust for any article of diet. Henceforward the child will likewise find it disgusting. Children, moveover, incline to like everything that those whom they are fond of like. But if you are in a child's black books, he will detest whatever you say, whatever you do, and whatever you

like. A child is in the sulks and does not want to eat his soup; if now you unfortunately say that the soup is good, the child, who is at odds with you, interprets your saying by contraries, and may even take a permanent dislike to that particular soup.

These remarks do not apply to alimentary tastes alone. Carl Spitteler, in his *Premiers souvenirs*, writes as follows concerning a picture he possessed in childhood:

"Among the animals, I was particularly fond of the spotted hyena, whereas I had an unmeasured contempt for the striped hyena. The cassowary was one of my favourites; I greatly preferred it to the ostrich, for I considered that the latter bird suffered from overweening vanity. These sentiments were the outcome of my caprice. You are always talking about the striped hyena, and that is a good reason for my passion for the spotted hyena. Everyone insists upon the importance of the ostrich. Well, to me it seems a stupid bird; and my heart goes out to the cassowary, which you despise."

Unlike Carl Spitteler, most of us are unable to remember the origin of our tastes, and we therefore believe them to be innate and ineradicable. Nevertheless, some of our tastes do not even date from childhood, and yet their origin is suggestive. After too hearty a dinner, or one day when our stomach is a little out of order, we eat for dessert something we have always liked. Henceforward we find it unpalatable. We think our taste has altered, and from this date it has in fact altered. When we partake of a dish that is new to us, our attitude towards it is usually determined by similar reasons, and promptly the dish is classed among those we like or among those we dislike. Nay more, there are some who "know beforehand" that they will not like this

or that. Naturally these are among the prophecies that bring their own fulfilment. Above all will this ensue if others at table have insisted on the prophet's tasting the undesired food, for then his vanity and obstinacy come into play. With tastes as with opinions, adverse discussion strengthens them.

It is well known, finally, that the far-fetched names with which, in restaurants, commonplace dishes are christened, have a powerful influence in promoting gustatory satisfaction.

There are certain perverse impulses, derived from the nutritive impulse and developed by suggestion. These range from coprophagia, or the impulse to eat excrement, to drunkenness, which is scarcely less disgusting. To this subject we shall return.

When a tendency becomes greatly accentuated, we speak of it as a *passion*. This is exclusive; it occupies the entire being; it is an affective obsession, and suggestion plays the part that it plays in all obsessions. Before it, we are *passive*, we are astounded at our own weakness, and this makes us yet weaker and yet more passive.

Passion has been compared to a fixed idea. Charles Renouvier has thoughtfully termed it "mental vertigo." In any case, when we wish to compare passion with other psychological phenomena, it is the phenomena of suggestion which present themselves to the mind. In the struggle against passion, we once more recognize the futility of effort when this effort is directed in a sense opposed to that of the dominant obsession. The stronger the effort, the less effective it is. As soon as we have realized this fatality, the vertigo becomes accentuated;

it is as if we had to do with a falling body, which traverses distances proportional to the squares of the times occupied since the beginning of the fall. It is only the first step which is difficult. Thereafter, the rapid fall seems to carry us away. That is why "one must not trifle with love."

To express a sentiment one does not feel, is not always to lie, for he who expresses a sentiment begins to feel it. And by reiterating the expression of the sentiment, one may inflame it to a passion. Like the liar who ends by believing his own falsehoods, we are caught in our own snare. "By talking of love," says Pascal,[1] "we fall in love. It's the easiest thing in the world." And later he writes: "One can hardly feign love without being very near to being in love, or at least to being in love somewhere; for this simulation is not possible without having the mind and the thoughts of love." It is always the same principle: "You would not have sought me had you not already found me."

Whatever may have been the primary origin of a passion, we may affirm that its most conspicuous character, that from which its name is derived, its *passivity* (or rather our passivity in relation to it), is considerably intensified by spontaneous suggestion.

Furthermore, the very origin of the passion is in most cases an imitative suggestion. Like the well-to-do idler who studies his own symptoms until he succeeds in discovering in himself indications of all the ills that flesh is heir to, the adolescent, giving free rein to his wandering thoughts, discovers in himself the symptoms of the passion of which he has read so many descriptions. The schoolboy recalls the great passions he has studied, that

[1] Discours sur les passions de l'amour,

of Phèdre, that of "Venus, wholly devoted to running down her quarry"; the girl in the convent school impersonates herself as the heroine of some idyll written for such readers as herself, she is the Clara d'Ellébeuse[1] whose old-fashioned and false idealism arouses the ironical amusement of Francis Jammes; the little servant maid enjoying her first experience of town life, sees everything in the light thrown by sixpenny sensational novels; the street arab's views on life and passion are derived from the cinemas, which allure him by the presentation of figures superhuman in stature but subhuman in soul, the cinemas whose perverse suggestions are a social danger to-day. Each lad and each lass suggests to himself or to herself the form of passion which has presented itself to his or her imagination. Each is stamped, often for life, with the imprint of these early suggestions.

"Great passion," wrote Brunetière, "is as rare as great genius." As a rule, in fact, passion is a mere imitation, an unconscious counterfeit. Religious passions (as in the sixteenth century), patriotic passions (as to-day), flourish by crises, by epidemics. There is a passion of the century, just as there is the comet of a season, just as there is the latest craze or the fashionable dish. Unfortunately, the fashionable dish is often spiced with poison.

This discloses the enormous part played by spontaneous suggestion in the affective life. "Do you mean to imply," the objector will exclaim, "that all our senti-

[1] Clara d'Ellébeuse is a heroine of insipid romance of the type known as "romans pour jeunes filles." Such books were favourite school prizes in the fifties of the last century.—TRANSLATORS' NOTE.

ments, all our tastes, all our passions, or nearly all, are illusory?'' We foresee that the preceding pages will at first leave this impression, but it is a false impression. It arises from the fact that the starting-point of suggestion is imaginative, and that we are apt to look upon the imagination as the faculty of illusions, as ''the mistress of errors.'' This is one aspect of imagination, but it is not the only aspect. If we deliberately confound suggestion and illusion, we do so precisely because we ignore the great power of suggestion, a power which it is our present business to realize. We shall see clearly in the sequel that this power is creative, that it brings into existence the most tangible realities, such as bodily modifications. But, when we think the matter over carefully, we recognize that this creative power is equally manifest in affective suggestion.

The outcome of suggestion may be a state which is in certain respects illusory, as for example when judgments of things are in question. A true judgment must conform to the external reality to which it relates. Its truth contains an objective element. If I suggest to myself that the earth is square, and end by believing it to be square, it is true that I believe it, but it does not follow that the earth really is square, for I am the victim of illusion. A sentiment, on the other hand, is purely subjective. Its whole reality is in itself and in us. When I think that I suffer, I do really suffer; there are no imaginary ills, if by imaginary we mean illusory. A sentiment, a passion, may be the result of suggestion; but they are none the less real. Their essence is to be felt, and felt they are. Therein lies their full reality. Suggestion has veritably created something, for it has given life to a self-sufficient entity.

When a cause which we regard as insignificant brings into existence an effect which we know to be considerable, we must not allow ourselves to depreciate the effect because of our estimate of the cause. On the contrary, we must revise our estimate of the cause, and recognize its high potency.

CHAPTER SIX

ACTIVE OR MOTOR SUGGESTIONS

(Habits, Mediumistic Phenomena; Sayings and Doings, Happenings)

In the tendency, we have the natural stepping-stone from the affective life to the active life. Every tendency desires to externalize itself in action. This brings us to the domain of motor phenomena, where suggestion is expressed by the schematic formula:

The idea of a movement gives birth to this movement.

In practice, moreover, we have as a rule to do, not with a single movement, but with a whole series of movements organized upon a teleological and synthetic principle.

In the last chapter we referred to the perverse tendency known as drunkenness. This tendency is not fully developed unless it culminates in the act of drinking. Nay more, we can only speak of a passion for drink when the acts leading to intoxication are frequently repeated, so that we have, more or less, to do with a habit. As with every habit, the same thing happens as when a piece of cloth takes a fold. The frequent repetition of the action facilitates the particular motor discharge; one who has drunk often, will go on drinking. Now we do not wish to assimilate habit to suggestion; we must continue to employ the word suggestion in the restricted sense we have given to it. Nevertheless, if habit be not identical with suggestion,

the latter is terribly potent in promoting the acquirement of the former. Above all, in the case of drinking, for instance, suggestion tends to impress upon the practice that irresistible and "passionate" character which is typical of what we term drunkenness. The patient, because he has already yielded to his craving, fears that he will yield once more, and this contributes to his repeated falls. The more often his better will has been frustrated in the past, the less his power of resistance in the future. Furthermore, the state of intoxication, like that of reverie, is a state wherein mental control is slackened, wherein the subconscious dominates the mind. Now, as we shall show later, such a state is peculiarly favourable to suggestion. The images which are impressed upon the mind under such conditions have every chance of bearing fruit; and since in this case the images are those of drinking bouts, of glasses filled and drained, images associated with a feeling of enjoyment, we may say that every drinking bout is a suggestion of future intoxication. In addition, as always happens in cases of this kind, effort has a purely negative result, and this contributes increasingly to depress the subject.

An analogous process is at work in the passion for opium or morphine, in that for ether, and in that for tobacco. All of these, in varying degree, are likewise sustained by the state of intoxication which the various narcotics induce; or, to speak more strictly, by the autosuggestion which the state of intoxication facilitates.

The same considerations apply to the abuse of the sexual instinct, whether in normal heterosexual intercourse or in masturbation.

All these bad habits, from the most serious ones, like cleptomania, to the most trifling, like nail-biting, are

sustained and aggravated by spontaneous autosuggestion. It has frequently been pointed out that bad habits are much more easily contracted than good ones. This should suffice, I think, to prove that in the former case suggestion is at work. For the difference is that in the case of the bad habits we usually wish to strive against them, and this, as always happens with suggestion, is an infallible method for engulfing us more hopelessly in the quicksand. Despite the aphorism "who wills, can," we have to do here with cases wherein effort is invariably self-defeated, eventuating always in the opposite of what is desired. This happens because the idea, the suggestion, of powerlessness dominates the mind, and because the effort will always be transformed in the sense of the dominant idea.

Those under the rule of passion, from lovers who desire to be free from the thraldom of love, to drunkards who long to be free from the thraldom of drink, have in all ages derided the vanity of effort. When, in every variety of tone, they are assured that who wills can, they feel that they are not understood, and they turn away shrugging their shoulders. They are perfectly right. It is another cure that they need, and what the cure is we shall learn in due course.

In the sphere of movement, suggestion by imitation is common. Immoderate laughter readily spreads through a crowd; yawning is contagious. If we associate with a person suffering from a habitual nervous movement, we are apt to acquire it ourselves. The rhythmical gait of our companion on a walk leads us insensibly to keep step with him.

During a conversation we discover that our hand,

holding a pencil, is engaged in writing, "mechanically" as we say, i. e. subconsciously, some phrase which was uttered several minutes before; or it is drawing some object which has been within our range of vision, but which we do not even remember having noticed. The auditory image of the words heard, the visual image of the object seen, have been transformed into movement. For such images are motor images. Painters, without being consciously metaphorical, speak of the movement of a line; and in like manner, musicians speak of the movement of a melody. This is not the place to explain the physiological grounds for the complex nature of the images in question. Suffice it to point out that a motor image, evoked by a visual or auditory image with which it constitutes a united whole, has stimulated the brain; in the subconscious it has then been transformed into a real movement, or rather into a complicated series of intelligent and coördinated movements.

We have had occasion to refer to hallucinations which astonish the subject because their cause is unperceived, and which are nevertheless suggestions whose first phase has been subconscious. We even come across cases of subconscious [automatic] writing which is the outcome neither of the words of a recent conversation nor yet of any series of images actually present to the senses or of recent occurrence. Still, as Flournoy has well shown, in many of these cases the process can be reconstructed, and we then learn that here also we have to do with a suggestion of which the first phase (the verbal-motor image) is subconscious. The hand writes phrases which the subject has not foreseen, which astonish him, which conflict with his conscious tastes and his conscious ideas, and which none the less emanate from the depths of his being.

Many cases in which we might have been inclined to suspect "mediumism," i. e. the operation of a mind other than that of the subject, thus prove reducible to manifestations of "spontaneous" autosuggestion.

The phenomena of table-turning, likewise, are in many instances reducible by analysis to suggestions of this order. Often enough, the results of table-turning bring us back to the elementary case of the pencil which traces a word that has just been heard or sketches an object actually in the field of vision. Take for example the following record, made by a good observer actually present at the séance:

"We are seated at the table; our hands resting on it form a chain; for a time nothing happens. Suddenly, one of the legs of the table rises, beats out nine strokes at regular intervals, and then all is quiet again. Not until some time later do more complex phenomena begin. A moment after the nine strokes have been made, I glance at the clock, quite by chance, and I see that it has just struck nine."

Apparently the auditory image of the nine strokes of the clock, occurring in a profound silence and when the minds of the sitters were passive, was able, in the void as it were, freely to develop its motor accompaniments. The associated motor images were transformed into movement in the auditors, or at least in the most sensitive among the auditors (the medium); by the instrumentality of the hands, the subconscious movement was transmitted to the table.

This shows us, in passing, how much caution is requisite in the study of spiritualistic phenomena. Their analysis is exceptionally difficult, seeing that the greater part of the process is subconscious. But I am of opinion

that the methods of psychoanalysis (as applied to the fragmented hallucinations of the lad Amédée) can throw much light on such phenomena, for the primary object of psychoanalysis is, by indirect means, to open a way into the subconscious. Amédée's hallucination is closely analogous to the phenomena to which allusion has just been made; the difference being that in the latter case the suggestion was motor, whereas in Amédée the suggestion was representative.

A spiritualistic séance is extremely favourable to the working of spontaneous suggestion, and this for three reasons. In the first place, a condition of mental relaxation is imposed upon the participants. Secondly, an emotional state is invariably aroused by approximation to the mysterious. Thirdly, there exists an expectation that remarkable things will happen.

Spontaneous suggestion manifests itself, not merely in the production of trifling movements, but also in the initiation of complicated actions; it takes effect, not only in the formation of isolated habits, but likewise in its influence upon character, which is a bundle of mental habits.

More or less unconscious actions, due to involuntary imitation, are of frequent occurrence. We have the poor sheep of Panurge; and we have heroic charges in the battlefield. In the latter case, the intoxication of the firing, of the clamour, and sometimes of alcohol systematically distributed, induce the requisite hypnoid state. In a cavalry charge, the horses are subject to it no less than the men.

In so far as imitation is not fully conscious and deliberate, it is invariably a manifestation of suggestion. The child, in most cases, has no idea why he chooses to play

one game or another, but the idea is implanted in his mind by imitation. He does what he has seen others do, though he has sometimes forgotten having seen them.[1]

A year or two ago I carved a device on a tree.
The tree has made it its own, and thinks that it improvises.[2]

We all resemble that tree. And like the tree, between one year and the next we have grown; the device, the imprint, let us say the image graven upon our minds, has grown likewise in the subconscious. A slight trace made upon our life in childhood will in later days become a deep impression. We tend to act as we have seen others act, above all when the model has been forgotten. So long as we still remember our model, we know that we are imitating when we do as the model did. We know that the action does not emanate from ourselves, and before doing it we supervise the intention and discuss it. But when the model has been submerged in the subconscious, we imitate while thinking we "improvise," and we no longer discuss. Or, if we do discuss, the subconscious, teleological as ever, provides us with all kinds of excellent reasons for doing what it wishes us to do, when the only real reason is the presence in the subconscious of an image or a system of images which the conscious mind knows nothing of.

Psychoanalysis, though a very recent development, has already clearly revealed the action of suggestions which date from early childhood, their action upon the subject's whole life, upon his character, upon his innocuous or dangerous manias. It is no longer possible to

[1] Cf. Bovet, L'instinct combatif—the chapter on the part played by example.

[2] Victor Hugo.

doubt that for most of us the choice of a career is determined by infantile suggestions, which are often masked by the operation of the strange law of transference, but which are none the less discoverable. Furthermore, these are not simply motor suggestions, for with them are mingled affective elements. We tend to imitate what we like or what we admire. The dazzling epaulets of an indulgent uncle will, twenty years later, lead the nephew to embrace a military career, believing it to be "in the blood." An only child, whose parents are elderly and who have retired from active life, will perhaps know no other world than that of the school, and will perhaps admire no other dignity than that of the schoolmaster; these circumstances determine his choice of a profession; but after he has himself become a schoolmaster he is greatly astonished when psychoanalysis reveals to him the real reasons for his adoption of this "calling."

Psychoanalysis has clearly demonstrated that the phenomena and doings of everyday life, the utterances made in the most casual conversation, are powerful revealers of what, quite unknown to the subject, is going on in the subconscious. These phenomena, these doings, these utterances, are a clue to all that is most vigorously censored, to all that is hidden in the abysses of the mind; in especial are they this when they are least subject to our conscious supervision. Régis and Hesnard[1] give a number of examples taken from the various authors who originated this method.

"A well-bred man enters a room and greets everyone politely, with one exception, which is quite unconscious. Now the person overlooked is the son of a man of busi-

[1] Op. cit.

ness who has refused the newcomer's services as commission agent.

"Here are other examples: mistaking the hour of the train in a journey taken unwillingly; losing a present given by a friend with whom one has quarrelled; forgetting the name of a friend whose image is associated in our mind with that of someone whom we dislike; the involuntary spoiling of an object when we should like to replace it by a new one. In the same category come involuntary exclamations, blunders made from absence of mind, and the saying of 'yes' for 'no' when our real thought is in opposition with what we wish to say. During a psychoanalysis where sexual errors are in question, to play with a money-box may reveal a habit of masturbation. Every gesture of the patient under examination must be carefully noted, for every gesture may be a significant symptom.[1]

"Undesirable actions of a very grave character may be the work of the unconscious. Freud believes that in many cases death from accident, rashness, mistake, etc., is in reality an involuntary suicide dependent upon a complex."[2]

This proves that our ordinary sayings and doings are intimately related to our subconscious, and continually betray its thoughts. If we compare the censorship to a

[1] When collated with the results of other psychoanalytic methods (the study of dreams, reminiscences, etc.). Thus only can chance coincidences be excluded.

[2] It is possible that the death of Verhaeren, the great Belgian poet, was of this character. He was killed by a train in Amiens station. Again and again he had sung the horror and the beauty of railway trains, in language which reveals a very profound complex.

dam which retains a mass of mental material within the subconscious, we may say that spiritualistic manifestations, and hallucinations like those of Amédée, are the result of sudden breaches in this dam, the outcome of irruptions from the subconscious into the conscious. But the before-mentioned casual everyday sayings and doings are the expression of the continual escape of surplus energy from the subconscious, by way of the channels provided for normal overflow. If this be so (and psychoanalysis proves that it is so), we may infer that suggestions, in the second phase of their activity, having accumulated in the subconscious, must unceasingly utilize this means of escape in order to secure fulfilment. Since their action is teleological, and since to them all means are good which promote the attainment of the goal, we can foresee that from moment to moment they will inspire in us the movements, the actions, and the words which tend towards the ends in view, which favour realization.[1] Henceforward, everything must happen as if suggestion were in command of events. When we set out to do something with the preconceived idea, or with the fear, that we shall be unable to do it, everything will happen as if we were trying not to succeed. Unwittingly to ourselves, our dominant idea will inspire all the sayings and all the doings that are necessary to counteract our ostensible purpose. Nay more, in virtue of the law to which we have frequently referred, the stronger the efforts we make for success, the more unmistakably

[1] If the subconscious, as other facts suggest, is in possession of knowledge and of memories unknown by the conscious self, we can be sure that the subconscious will display remarkable sagacity in the choice of means of this character. Extraordinarily accurate realizations will ensue.

shall we favour failure. And thus it goes throughout life.

A posteriori, experience teaches that things happen just as we have described. American writers are fully convinced of the fact by direct and practical observation of social life.

Emerson, the great pioneer in preaching the gospel of moral force, wrote as follows in days when the doctrine of suggestion was still unknown:

"He [man] thinks his fate alien because the copula [between person and event] is hidden. But the soul contains the event that shall befall it; for the event is only the actualization of its thoughts, and what we pray to ourselves for is always granted. The event is the print of your form. It fits you like your skin. . . . A man will see his character emitted in the events that seem to meet, but which exude from and accompany him. Events expand with the character."[1]

By recent American writers this idea has been developed into a veritable system.[2]

Orison Swett Marden, in his highly figurative language, writes as follows:

"To be ambitious for wealth and yet always expecting to be poor, to be always doubting your ability to get what you long for, is like trying to reach east by travelling west. There is no philosophy which will help a man to succeed when he is always doubting his ability to do so, and thus attracting failure. . . .

[1] Emerson, The Conduct of Life, Chapter I, Fate, Riverside Edition, Routledge, London, 1883, pp. 43 and 45.

[2] These authors, who often wander into the region of mysticism, have founded a school which is transitional between the first Nancy school and the New Nancy School.

"You will go in the direction in which you face. . . .

"There is a saying that every time the sheep bleats it loses a mouthful of hay. Every time you allow yourself to complain of your lot, to say 'I am poor; I can never do what others do; I shall never be rich; I have not the ability that others have; I am a failure; luck is against me,' you are laying up so much trouble for yourself. . . .

"No matter how hard you may work for success, if your thought is saturated with the fear of failure, it will kill your efforts, neutralize your endeavours, and make success impossible."[1]

Herbert Parkyn explains these phenomena as follows:

"You may dislike a person, but for reasons politic you determine not to show your dislike. You may even go out of your way in an endeavour to make yourself agreeable to the object of your dislike; still in some way or other a coldness will spring up between you, and the dislike becomes mutual and may end in an open rupture without either person being able to explain how the dislike was uncovered. The explanation is simple. Thought takes form in action, and the dislike will so influence your actions that you will betray yourself by a look or a nudge or some other unconscious slight. The action may be wholly involuntary or unconscious on your part, and it may be just as unconsciously noticed on the part of the other person; but his involuntary mind takes cognizance of the action, the seed of discord is sown in his mind also, and the damage is done.

"Similarly you may cherish a strong desire to go somewhere, to do something, or to possess something. You

[1] O. S. Marden, The Miracle of Right Thought, Rider, London, 1913, pp. 46-8.

may not deem your desire reasonable nor within the realm of possibility at the time, but your actions, conversations, and decisions will be influenced by this desire in various ways. Although it may take years for you to gratify your desire, still that desire is usually gratified by the opening up of ways and means, and this opening up, although it may appear accidental, is, nine times out of ten, the direct result of actions unconsciously performed through the promptings of your desire."[1]

Strictly speaking, however, these phenomena might be regarded as no more than coincidences, and the above explanation might be looked upon as nothing better than a plausible hypothesis. But as soon as we compare them with the precise interpretations of psychoanalysis, the gap is filled and the doubt vanishes.

We now understand how our own mental attitude leads to success or failure. We grasp the secret of "luck," good or bad; and we realize why those who believe in their fortunate or unfortunate star are rarely given the lie by the facts. This fatality exists, but it is internal and not external; just as the fatality of a habit or a passion is internal when we wish to overcome it but are unable to do so. We hold the key to this determinism. As soon as we know how to make use of the key, we escape from the dominance of fate, we win freedom. Our star is in ourselves, and upon ourselves does it depend whether the star is lucky or unlucky.

[1] Op. cit. pp. 113, 114.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MOTOR SUGGESTIONS
(*continued*)

(*Functional and Organic Modifications, Maternal Impressions, Cures*)

ALL the motor suggestions hitherto considered are related to movements which can be carried out under the full control of the conscious self. Suggestion here does no more than follow the path trodden by the will. In many instances, identical phenomena can be voluntarily reproduced. We may feign to yawn; the actress who plays the part of Juliet's nurse learns to laugh immoderately. In the case of mediumistic phenomena (automatic writing, for instance), the subject may cheat.

There are, however, other motor autosuggestions which act on muscles that are not subject to the control of the conscious will, the muscles which regulate (or fail to regulate) the visceral functions. The same remark applies to those imperceptible movements on which the most profound organic modifications depend. Suggestions of this category, methodically applied in the form of reflective or induced suggestions, constitute the basis of psychotherapeutics, of a system of psychotherapy characterized by extreme potency, compared with which all that has hitherto been effected by ordinary hypnotic suggestion will soon appear to have been of a very elementary order. Indeed, to those who have closely fol-

lowed the latest acquirements of the New Nancy School, it is already plain that ordinary hypnotism represents merely the infantile stage of the art of psychotherapeutics.

In all ages, unofficial healers have obtained remarkable results in cases where orthodox medical skill has failed. This gives cause for thought. How do these healers effect their cures? They do not directly apply suggestion as ordinarily understood; but they are backed by a great reputation, due to chance or to legend; people believe in them; and they make use of fantastic methods, whose strangeness and illogicality arouse a sense of the marvellous, producing in the patient an emotional state which facilitates the working of autosuggestion. In these conditions, faith cures.

We have no right to deny the reality of "animal magnetism," or to deny the curative effects of "absent treatment," but there can be no question that many of the cures attributed to animal magnetism or to absent treatment are in truth the outcome of spontaneous autosuggestion.

Coué has proved this over and over again. Telling a patient that he will think of him every evening at a fixed hour, he requests the sick man to collect his thoughts at the specified time, and to put himself in mental rapport with his doctor. The value of the treatment, he is told, will speedily become apparent. The patient obeys orders. At the appointed hour, Coué is gardening or fishing. Nevertheless, after a few "sittings," a cure ensues. Sometimes it deserves to be called a "miraculous" cure.

At the outset of his studies, Coué tells me, he noted the cure of an extremely refractory illness, when the patient, on his advice, took a new patent medicine. Greatly

astonished at the result, he analyzed the medicine, and found that it was a harmless compost, whose whole value was based upon skilful puffery—and above all, as he learned in the sequel, upon the involuntary eloquence with which he himself had advised the use of the remedy and upon the patient's confidence in him and his word. Hence germinated in his mind the idea that suggestive treatment might prove valuable in organic maladies. This idea was to be independently confirmed by the work of Bonjour, of Lausanne.

Warts are peculiarly responsive to autosuggestion; and it was to warts, in this connection, that Bonjour first devoted his attention. In the Swiss canton of Vaud, curers of warts abound; and here it sometimes happens that the patient will employ a famous prescription without troubling to consult the healer. In these cases, autosuggestion is seen in all its beauty. Prescriptions pass from village to village and from hamlet to hamlet. Some of them are incredibly quaint. For example, to cause warts, the subject goes out one evening, moistens the tip of the finger, looks at a star, and simultaneously applies the wet finger-tip to the other hand. The operation is repeated, the finger being freshly moistened with saliva each time, while the subject counts "one, two, three . . ." up to the number of warts desired. Now, wherever the moistened finger-tip has been applied, a wart duly appears. I do not guarantee the alleged numerical precision, but the development of warts as a sequel of such practices is a proved fact. The Vaudois girls are very fond of this amusement—not for the mere pleasure of having warts (for the pleasure of their possession is certainly open to dispute), but for a pleasure which to them is very real and very great, the pleasure

of passing them on to someone else. A ribbon is tied round the affected hand, and is knotted as many times as there are warts on the hand; then the ribbon is dropped on the highway. Whoever picks it up and unties the knots, will get the warts, and the original owner of the warts will be cured. Another prescription, equally efficacious, is to rub the warts with a piece of bacon rind, which is subsequently placed beneath a stone, on damp ground. As soon as the bacon rind is rotten, the warts will be cured. But if, by bad luck, someone moves the stone, one has wasted one's pains and one's bacon rind, and one must begin all over again.

In the same canton, persons suffering from dropsy are cured by lying on two mattresses between which some toads have been placed.

The value of such methods depends upon their illogicality, their strangeness, which strikes the imagination of the simple, monopolizes the attention, and fills the mind with a sense of mystery.

To close this series of laughable examples, I will quote a picturesque case reported by Gillet, one of Coué's pupils. An asthmatic, on a holiday journey, was awakened in his hotel by a violent paroxysm of the disease.

"Greatly distressed for breath, he got out of bed and hunted for the matches. He had a craving for fresh air, but could not find the window. 'Confound these third-rate hotels, where one gropes vainly in the dark!' He is suffocating, and he clamours for air. Feeling about, he at length finds a pane of glass. 'Damn it all, where's the window-bolt? . . . Never mind, this will do!' and he breaks the pane. The fragments fall to the floor. Now he can breathe; again and again he fills his chest with the fresh air; the throbbing at his temples passes,

and he goes back to bed. 'Saved!' . . . Next morning, one of the items in his bill was, 'Broken clock-case, fr. 4.35.' "[1]

More extensive modifications, such as can only be effected by a considerable amount of work within the organism, are presented by the cases (now beyond dispute) in which the imagination of the mother influences the fœtus.

Observers worthy of the utmost confidence, from Darwin to Liébault, have in this connection reported definite data, which must be regarded as classical. Darwin records that a child resembled in every feature a girl of the neighbourhood to whom the father had been making love during the mother's pregnancy. Liébault mentions the case of a vinedresser who was exactly like a statue in the village church, the statue of the patron saint of the village. During her pregnancy, the man's mother had been obsessed with the idea that this would happen. But I propose to quote the detailed account of a recent instance recorded by Artault:

"During the second month of her pregnancy, a young woman was visited by a friend of her husband. She had never seen the man before (your readers are so sceptical, that I must be precise on this point). She was greatly struck by a malformation in the nail of his left forefinger. The nail was thick and curved, so that it was like a lion's claw. The deformity was the sequel of an ordinary accident, in which the terminal phalanx of the forefinger had been crushed. The young woman's mind became obsessed by this deformity. The friend was staying in the neighbourhood for several months, and every

[1] Gillet, L'auto-suggestion, Bulletin Ecole de Nancy, 1913.

time he came to dinner the expectant mother was unable to take her eyes off the finger, for she was terrified lest her child should be born with a similar finger-nail. She was haunted by the fear to such an extent that her husband in the end begged his friend to wear a glove when the wife was present. But, alas, the impression on the fœtus had already been made, and when the baby was born at term (once more, I am precise) the left index finger had a claw like that of the unlucky visitor. The child was a girl whom I see very often. Whenever I look at her clawed finger, I compare it mentally with that of the model, whom I have also seen. Before the experimental certainty of this instance of maternal impressions, which is on quite a different plane from old wives' tales of birthmarks, I smile at systematized incredulity. I am unable to explain it, but I record it."[1]

In recording facts of this nature it is usual to insist upon a fixed idea, a haunting, an obsession, as the starting-point. The mother's spontaneous attention has been obstinately fixed on an image, and by a delicate and complicated motor process this image is realized within the organism. There can be no doubt that the occurrence is favoured by the heightened emotional susceptibility characteristic of pregnancy. If we compare suggestions of this order with those realized during hypnotic sleep (such as the case reported in the Introduction), we see that whereas we were formerly concerned with functional changes, we now have to do with organic changes. Here, then, autosuggestion is at work in all its power.

Analogous phenomena, though less marked for the most part, are observed in connection with a great many births. We are no longer entitled to attribute them to

[1] Artault, Chronique médicale.

mere coincidence. We must rather hold that nothing more is requisite to produce them than an abnormal or exceptionally sensitive temperament. Once more, it is the task of psychoanalysis to verify the hypothesis that a large proportion of the stigmata wrongly ascribed to heredity, are really due to fear, to a superstition regarding heredity that exists in the mother's mind. The high degree to which the mechanism of childbirth can be influenced by the activity of the brain (a sensibility proved by the instances previously recorded) compels us to believe that when a pregnant woman is obsessed by the idea that her child will display some parental stigma, the chances are considerable that this will actually happen. When suggestion is better understood, and when a knowledge of suggestion has been more widely diffused, the superstition of heredity, as disseminated by nineteenth-century science and as taught by Zola in his novels, will receive a deadly blow—not indeed as regards the primary principles of the theory, but as regards many of its premature applications. For there are three kinds of suggestion which reinforce one another in the simulation of heredity: first of all, there is suggestion acting on the fœtus; secondly, there is the imitative suggestion which is one of the laws of the development of the child; and lastly, in the adult, there is the superstition that heredity is "inexorable"—a superstition no less erroneous than the belief in miraculous cures, and just as disastrous as the latter is often beneficent.

In like manner, psychoanalysis will doubtless verify with increasing frequency the hypothesis that many miscarriages, and many difficult deliveries, are chiefly due to maternal autosuggestion. The starting-point in these cases may be a fear of such occurrences, coöperating with

an unavowed anticipatory hatred of the expected child; or it may be some other repressed wish, of which the conscious ego knows nothing, such as the desire that the birth of a living child shall not take place, this desire being the outcome of a more or less unacknowledged hatred of the father, transferred, without the knowledge of the subject, to the coming infant. But the fear of difficult delivery seems to be the commonest cause of such troubles. I have noted the following instance, in the course of a psychoanalysis.

A young woman, mother of a child of seven, had since the birth of this child suffered from nervous troubles which her doctors had several times declared to be amenable to psychoanalytic treatment. I begin, in accordance with the usual method, by asking her to tell me of some dream, recent or otherwise, which had particularly struck her. Unhesitatingly, she described a dream dating from seven years before, and, in the course of the conversation, she spontaneously told me that it had happened during her pregnancy. It must have made a profound impression on her mind, seeing that the memory was so vivid and so promptly recounted. Moreover, there could be little doubt that the dream was directly related to the pregnancy.

In the dream she was at the town hall. The mayor was away, and the patient's husband was acting as his deputy. A stranger suddenly appeared, a man of crafty and disagreeable aspect. He was a foreigner, apparently of Hungarian or Italian extraction, and he wanted the authorization necessary for residence in Switzerland. Her husband begged the stranger to await the mayor's return, but the man grew impatient, brandished a dagger, chased the husband into the street, and wounded

him. The young woman now found herself at the window, looking down anxiously into the street where this was happening. The mayor appeared beneath the window, saying to her: "Nothing serious will happen, as long as you don't come down; be careful, and everything will be all right." Then she saw her husband lying in a bed which was the replica of her own. He had a bleeding wound in the forehead.

Examining the patient by the association test, I now discovered that the mayor resembled the doctor who was attending her during her pregnancy, so that in her dream the mayor symbolized the doctor; this explained the advice given towards the end. In like manner, the foreigner was the coming child, the intruder.[1] The dagger and the wound symbolized the pains and the bleeding associated with the childbirth she so greatly dreaded. By symmetrical transference, the wound was transferred to the father, to the father's *forehead,* the site of the wound being a characteristic instance of the working of the endopsychic censor. To sum up, the young woman had an intense and all-pervading dread of the ordeal she had to endure; she anticipated disaster. Her fears were realized. The expected stranger was born before the doctor arrived, and the mother had a serious flooding.

This dream discloses a mental condition extremely favourable to the working of suggestion: the vividness with which it was remembered showed that the patient's attention was acutely concentrated on her experiences; and the distressing nightmare proved the existence of

[1] This stranger had to cross a frontier before entering her world, like the Hungarian or the Italian who comes to Switzerland.

an emotional state. We have here a further instance in which the first phase of suggestion was subconscious, was repressed, so that (as in the hallucinations of the lad Amédée) by symbolism alone was it revealed to the consciousness of the subject.

I give another experience of psychoanalysis.

A young woman, whose first marriage had been extremely unhappy, was looking forward to a second marriage, in which she hoped to find happiness. From the moment when this new prospect opened, menstrual irregularities, from which she had formerly suffered but from which she had long been free, reappeared. The analysis showed that the promised destiny seemed to her "too beautiful," so that she could not believe it would ever be fulfilled. She dreaded that some obstacle would intervene, and, above all, that her health would stand in the way; this fear tended to realize itself through autosuggestion. But the analysis, disclosing the cause of the trouble, promptly neutralized it.

A simulation of pregnancy may result from suggestion. Pierre Janet has observed an instance of it in a hypnotized subject. The condition was due to an autosuggestion grafted on a suggestion made by the operator.

"I suggest to Rose that we are not in 1888, but in 1886, and that the month is April. My object is merely to note the modifications of sensation that may ensue. The result is remarkable. She groans, complains of fatigue, of inability to walk. 'Why, what's the matter with you?' —'Oh, nothing; it's natural to my condition.'—'What do you mean? What condition?' She replies by a gesture, pointing to her abdomen, which has suddenly become distended by an attack of hysterical tympanites.

Unwittingly, I have brought her back by suggestion into a period when she was pregnant."[1]

Furthermore, suggestions of this character may arise in the normal waking state. A woman who dreads being pregnant may present all the signs of pregnancy, deceiving herself in the matter; or, if she has never been pregnant, she may present what she imagines to be the signs of pregnancy.

Louis Rénon[2] has endeavoured to ascertain the part played by spontaneous suggestion in the treatment of chronic pulmonary tuberculosis. A careful interpretation of statistics has enabled him to present precise numerical results, so that his inferences have a solidity which is always lacking in a purely narrative record. His conclusions, therefore, are worth recording in full.

"A comparison of the results obtained by the various methods of antitubercular treatment, shows that these results are practically identical in all cases. Whatever the treatment, there is the same percentage of improvements, the same percentage of cures, the same percentage of arrests, the same percentage of cases in which the patient grows worse. Laumonier, my colleague and a fellow-member of the Therapeutical Society, showed a few years ago that in four different methods of treatment the percentage of cases cured or alleviated ranged from 65% to 71% while the percentage of cases in which there was no improvement or in which the patient grew worse ranged from 29% to 35%. There is always the same proportion of satisfactory results, whatever method of

[1] Pierre Janet, L'automatisme psychologique, Paris, 1889.

[2] Le monde médical, January 15, 1914; Bulletin Ecole de Nancy, 1914.

treatment is employed. I have described this proportion as 'the normal coefficient of amelioration'; and I have formulated the following principle:

"Every new method for the treatment of chronic tuberculosis, provided that it is harmless, will give satisfactory results.

"Here we have an absolutely true axiom. I should like to see it stamped in large letters on the cover of every new work upon phthisiotherapeutics; for unless it be taken into account, the accurate appraisement of antitubercular medication becomes difficult or impossible. Before we can venture to say that a method of treating tuberculosis is valuable, the treatment must have been in operation for a period exceeding that of the normal coefficient of amelioration, which is as a rule about three weeks; the treatment must have stood the test of time; it must have been applied to the same patient by different physicians; it must have unquestionable experimental value. Then only are we justified in asserting that the remedy is genuinely antitubercular.

"Why is there this normal coefficient of amelioration? The matter is quite simple. Whenever a method of treatment is recommended by a doctor who believes in the value of his own advice, there ensues in the sufferer from chronic tuberculosis a psychotherapeutic state, a state tending to promote cure. This state is the same, whatever the nature of the treatment. The patient accepts the suggestions of his medical adviser, and the particular medication is no more than the vehicle of suggestion.

"Albert Mathieu, in a paper which throws much light on the general problems of therapeutics, has recorded the influence, upon tubercular patients in hospital, of

the hypodermic injection of cubic centimetre doses of physiological serum, which is given the imposing name of antiphymosis. The patient is told that the serum in question is a new and most valuable discovery; and after his mind has been prepared in this way, an injection is administered daily for five or six days. The cases were carefully selected, and the results were accurately noted day by day. They surpassed all expectation. Within a few days, appetite returned; there was less cough, less expectoration, there were fewer night-sweats; there was even an improvement in the pulmonary physical signs; there was an increase in weight, ranging from three to six pounds. But all the old signs and symptoms recurred immediately when the injections were discontinued.

"'Tubercular patients,' writes Mathieu, 'gain vitality directly anything is done for them; their courage rises and hope is reborn.'

"The most renowned phthisiotherapeutists are those who have great personal influence over their patients; those who have thoroughly entered into the patient's mind and feelings, those who as it were hold the patient in the hollow of their hand; those who guide the patient in accordance with the latest principles of the struggle against tuberculosis, and have grasped all the resources available for that struggle; those who can reinforce their medication with a strong dose of suggestion."

Further examples might be given, but they would teach nothing more concerning the causes and effects of motor suggestion. Anyone who desires picturesque illustrations of its laws, should turn to a remarkable work by Duchatel and Warcollier, entitled *Les miracles de la*

volonté.[1] From the scientific point of view, the writers' methods of exposition are not invariably above reproach. Nevertheless, Boirac, a man of science and philosopher of established reputation, has thought fit, with good reason, to contribute a preface. For, in spite of dubious theories and hasty conclusions, the book displays considerable learning and has indisputable evidential value. It contains abundant records, derived from the writings of distinguished observers of our own day and of earlier days. It is a storehouse, and we need merely open the door. Phenomena of this character, reported as isolated incidents, always have the aspect of anomalous freaks. We advance a step by bringing them together in a collection.

Let us first consider the cases of *dermographism,* in which an image existing in the subject's mind becomes outlined on the skin. The authors make a passing reference to the witches of the middle ages upon whose backs, it is asserted, the word "Satan" was inscribed. They pass to a contemporary and precise report quoted from Charles Richet. A mother is watching her child at play. Accidentally the child unfastens the catch suspending a heavy sliding door in front of the fireplace, and is in danger of being guillotined. The mother's heart leaps to her mouth, and then, in a moment, there forms round her neck—the threatened part in the child—a raised erythematous circle, a weal which endures for several hours. Here we have a striking instance of the power of emotion. Another case is that of a little girl upon whose skin appears the answer to the sum she is trying to do. In this instance the image which gave rise to the suggestion was subconscious.

[1] Durville, Paris.

From dermographism we pass to *stigmatization*, the latter being merely a variety of the former. Stigmata appear on the skin of certain mystically inclined persons, appear in the places where Christ was wounded. These phenomena can be reproduced experimentally. As regards spontaneous stigmatization, we are not solely dependent on the account of semi-legendary figures in remote antiquity; accurate observations have been made upon modern stigmatists, like Louise Lateau and Catherine Emmerich, with sphygmographic tracings and other precise details. In the case of Catherine Emmerich, the circulation was directly controlled by autosuggestion, the blood being distributed as it would have been distributed in an actual crucifixion.

Next, in the world of Islam, we read of the ordeal by fire, of the devotee whose hand is not burned by the hot iron; and we read of the ordeal by sword, which will not draw blood. The authors give a number of instances in which obstinate maladies were cured by spontaneous autosuggestion, the outcome of some novel and striking method of treatment. Of exceptional interest is a quotation from Cabanès, professor at the university of Liége. This dates from 1912.

The book is fascinating, and is full of matter. We unhesitatingly refer our readers to it, though we are far from endorsing all the author's interpretations. We must, moreover, call attention to the misleading character of the title. Instead of speaking of the miracles of the "will," Duchatel and Warcollier should (with O. S. Marden) have referred to the miracles of "thought." Failing this, they should have made it perfectly clear that the will of which they write corresponds to what Schopenhauer termed the "unconscious will," so that

the subject has the impression that what happens takes place outside the domain of *his* will, by a purely spontaneous process.

The most extraordinary among the suggestions recorded in *Les miracles de la volonté* differ only by their extremely picturesque character from those which have been analyzed in the preceding pages. In fact, they do not imply any profounder changes in the organism. It would be an error to look upon them as, in essence, manifestations of an exceptional or morbid temperament. We need not go to religious devotees or to persons suffering from grave hysteria, when we are looking for instances in which suggestion leads to organic modifications. We shall realize this more clearly when, day after day, we have seen such organic modifications produced to order, as the outcome of reflective or induced suggestion.[1]

[1] To this series of examples, we might add those of "suggestion which kills." A nun, whose case was noted by Coué, was confined to bed by illness during the winter. She heard or imagined she heard her doctor murmur, "She won't outlive April." This idea became fixed in her mind. Nevertheless, for the time being she got better, left her bed, and seemed quite strong again. But to every visitor she said, shaking her head, that she felt sure she would die in April. On April 1st her appetite disappeared as if by magic. A few days later she took to her bed once more, and died shortly before the end of the month.

Tolstoi, in his later years, declared that the number 7 was fatal to him. On November 7, 1905, in his Readings for Every Day of the Year, he gives a number of thoughts on death. On November 7, 1910 (O. S.), he died after a few days' illness, although his condition "had not seemed grave."

Recall, further, the case of the man sentenced to death, who was told he was to perish as the victim of a scientific experi-

In conclusion we have to note that there is no radical difference between the action of suggestion when its results are purely functional, and its action when its results are organic. If we admit that suggestion can act in the former cases (and this has long been admitted), there need be no difficulty about acknowledging the reality of its action in the latter cases. For certain persons of pseudo-scientific mind, persons who regard as "incomprehensible" everything which disturbs their habits of thought, the organic effects of suggestion are "inadmissible" until they have seen these effects experimentally verified—and even thereafter. Such persons are extremely illogical. They admit that suggestion acts on the circulation, on the secretions, and in a localized fashion upon various parts of the body, doing this through the intermediation of the vasomotor nerves. Now let us suppose that the vasomotor mechanism stimulates or restricts the circulation through the capillaries supplying some particular group of cells, and that this action is *persistent.* Thereupon the cells of this group will, as the case may be, enjoy an excess of nourishment, or will be insufficiently supplied. They will prosper, like parasites; or they will atrophy. The suggestive action which manifests itself in the case of tumours, local malformations, etc., can be very simply explained on these lines, without having recourse to any laws other than those with which we are already familiar.

ment. A harmless prick was made in each of his limbs; a tap was turned on in the room and he was told the water running was his blood flowing from the wounds; believing this, he died.

See, finally, Freud's opinion (quoted on page 99) that death may be caused by a subconscious complex.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

We have finished the analytical exposition of the phenomena classified in the scheme we drew up at the beginning of Chapter III; we have discussed representative suggestions, affective suggestions, and active or motor suggestions.

A special chapter must now be devoted to what may be termed *conditional autosuggestions,* the autosuggestions which are the realizations of an idea that may be formulated as follows: "Every time that so-and-so happens, so-and-so will follow."

Practitioners of hypnotism have long been familiar with "posthypnotic suggestion." Having induced sleep, they order the subject to do some fantastic thing after he has awakened; or they tell him to come back in a week or a fortnight. The subject obeys the suggestion, without knowing why, for he thinks he is actuated by his own will, and finds excellent reasons for what he does. The means employed by the subconscious teleology, for the justification of the act, are often remarkably subtle. A young man to whom I had suggested that on awaking he should assume the traditional Napoleonic attitude, with the arms folded on the chest, began, when awakened, by expressing his astonishment at all the phenomena which had just taken place. His surprise became more and more intense, until at last, exclaiming, "Look here, this is a bit too thick!" he folded his arms in an appropriate pose. Now the astonishment van-

ished; with crossed arms he stood in statuesque immobility; behold Napoleon! The gestures of astonishment had been the justificatory means. The subconscious had utilized astonishment, the subject's actual state of mind, and had modified it in the direction of the suggestion which was to be realized. This is, in a sense, analogous to what takes place in hallucination by compromise.

Posthypnotic suggestion may take a conditional form. We may command the hypnotized subject to have this or that idea, to execute this or that gesture, whenever this, that, or the other happens. . . . By this method we may make the patient remember the draught he has to take every time he sits down to a meal.

But such posthypnotic suggestions are in most cases valid for a brief period only. As the interval increases, as the impression received during the induced sleep gradually fades, they become inefficacious.

Nevertheless, there also exist *conditional spontaneous autosuggestions,* and these may remain in force for an indefinite period, until they are inhibited by a counter-suggestion. They may last for years, for an entire lifetime. This is strongly confirmatory of our thesis that autosuggestion is in reality the type of all suggestion; that hypnotic heterosuggestion is no more than a reproduction of autosuggestion, a reproduction that is often attenuated, fragile, and unstable.[1]

[1] In Auguste Forel's opinion, curative heterosuggestion is durable in two cases only: first, when there is no reason why the material cause of the trouble should recur; and, secondly, when the heterosuggestion perpetuates itself in the subject "as a habit and as an autosuggestion." It is obvious that Forel was a precursor in expounding the theory of autosuggestion brought forward in the present work.

If hypnotic heterosuggestion was the first form of suggestion to attract attention, this is because the idea which forms its starting-point, though forgotten by the subject, is clearly remembered by the physician. The hypnotizer, in fact, being aware that he was making an experiment, noted all that happened with great care. Moreover, the number of the ideas proposed by him to the subject was strictly limited; they constituted a few shining points upon a dark background; consequently they were easy to remember.

On the other hand, the ideas from which our spontaneous autosuggestions are derived, are lost amid the vast swarm of incidents that fill the busy life of our consciousness. Nay more, as we have seen, our consciousness is quite ignorant of some of them. Take, further, into account the effects of repression (to which we referred at the outset), and it will be easy to understand why hypnotic heterosuggestion, though infinitely less important than spontaneous autosuggestion, was the first to be discovered.

Confirmation of the foregoing is furnished by the following examples, which Coué has gleaned for me from his vast experience. The proof that we are concerned with pure conditional autosuggestions, with phenomena that are not determined by any organic lesion whatever, is given by the fact that in every case the trouble disappeared IMMEDIATELY after a single countersuggestion. This was the criterion by which Coué was guided in the choice of his examples.

Case 1.—Madame N. of Nancy, travelling from Nancy to Sainte-Menehould to visit her son, became ill when the train was passing through Troyes, and vomited repeat-

edly. Henceforward, EVERY TIME she made the same journey, she was again attacked by vomiting while passing through Troyes. (Cured after one sitting.)

Case 2.—For six months, a young girl had lost the use of her right hand. EVERY TIME she tried to take hold of anything, a contracture of the hand took place, the spasm passing off directly she discontinued the attempt to use the hand. (Cure after a single sitting.)

Case 3.—A young man eighteen years of age, living near Nancy, had a hysteroid crisis EVERY morning, directly he got out of bed. (Cure after a single sitting; kept under observation for a long time; no relapse.)

Case 4.—I give this in Coué's own words: "Z., of Troyes, a man of about forty, suffering from heart, liver, and kidney troubles; had been confined to his room for more than a year, bedridden for the most part. One day, five months before I was first consulted, the patient was seized at five o'clock with a violent paroxysm of dyspnœa, and imagined from moment to moment that he was dying. Various remedies used by his doctor failed to give relief, and the crisis continued until half-past nine in the evening. Next day, towards half-past four, the patient said to his wife that the paroxysm would shortly recur, and in fact, when the clock struck five, the dyspnœa returned in full force, passing through exactly the same phases as before, and subsiding at half-past nine. Henceforward the crises recurred daily, WITHOUT EXCEPTION, for five months. When the man's wife came to see me, and told me the history of his sufferings, I assured her that in my opinion it would not be difficult to cure him of the paroxysms, for it was obvious to my mind that they were unconsciously induced by the patient himself. I begged her to bring

him to my consulting room next day at two. He arrived at the appointed hour, in a carriage. Several other patients were present. I asked Z. to take a seat, and to watch what was going on. I would attend to him, I said, when I had done with the others. Having put my patients to sleep (for at this time I still continued this practice, which I have since abandoned), I began to make general suggestions to them. Turning round while I was speaking, I perceived that the sight of the others sleeping had induced sleep in Z. Having continued general suggestions for a time, I next proceeded to make appropriate suggestions to each patient. I then awakened them all, and told Z. to return the next day at the same hour. When he kept this appointment, I asked him how he was. 'I have had no paroxysm,' he answered. 'I knew I should be all right yesterday, when I left you.' Further suggestions were made that afternoon, and a fresh appointment was arranged for the morrow. At this third visit, the report was the same. The paroxysmal dypnœa was cured, and has not since returned.[1]

"We may infer that the first paroxysm was genuine, and that the 150 others were unconsciously brought on by the patient's expectation that the trouble would recur at the customary hour."

The above examples, culled from among many, of conditional spontaneous autosuggestion, will suffice to put us on our guard against pains and other symptoms which appear in us EVERY TIME that this or that happens —when the tie between the supposed cause and the sup-

[1] The report quoted in the text was penned six years after the incidents described.

posed effect is not clearly demonstrated. Attacks of migraine which a lady always has on her at home day; seizures of vertigo that come on "every morning"; toothache from which we suffer "whenever we are tired"; headaches that affect us "every time we go out of doors"; bronchitis that recurs "every winter"; the "old" rheumatism that turns up each December—these and many similar troubles are partly or wholly due to autosuggestion. The fact is proved by the prompt way in which they are cured when countersuggestion is practised after the Nancy method. Even dysmenorrhœa and other menstrual irregularities, though they are disorders of a periodic physiological function, often belong to the same category, and are frequently relieved by the same treatment.

Moreover, as we learned just now in the case of post-hypnotic suggestion, so here, we learn once more the teleology of the subconscious, which desires to justify to the subject's mind the existence of the assumed causal nexus. We find such excellent reasons for our belief. My vertigo comes on every morning because I awake feeling uneasy. My attacks recur every evening because I am worn out by the labours of the day. I have a migraine every at-home day! The matter is quite simple: there is such a crowd of people; I have to think of such a lot of things, to talk so much. Why do I always begin to vomit when the train reaches Troyes? It is natural enough, seeing that the journey from Nancy to Troyes is the maximum my stomach can endure without revolt. I ignore the fact that longer journeys on other lines cause me no inconvenience. I do not recall that I can work much harder than I work on my at-home days, and nevertheless remain entirely free from migraine; for in-

stance, at the ball the other night, although I talked a great deal there, and it was after the fatigues of the day. Everything of this kind is forgotten, repressed, censored. We hold fast to our excellent reasons. Terrible is the case of those who are unlucky enough to have a modicum of intelligence, and especially of those who have medical knowledge.[1] The excellent reasons are built up into a system, whose foundations it is far from easy to undermine. If anyone wants to discuss the matter, if anyone doubts the validity of your arguments, you are annoyed, for you cling to your reasons for being ill. Or rather, your subconscious does it through your mouth, for it is the subconscious that clings to the reasons.

These reasons are like those of the young man referred to above, the man who folded his arms "because he was astonished." In reality he folded his arms because of a suggestion impressed upon his subconscious self, a suggestion that he was to assume the pose of Napoleon. Nevertheless, there were excellent reasons for his astonishment, and these reasons had their reasons in turn. The end pursued by the suggestion, exercises, as it were, a powerful magnetic attraction upon an entire chain of thoughts. We can well imagine that if, in the familiar experiment of the physical laboratory, the iron filings could speak, they too would find excellent reasons for arranging themselves in rows when subjected to the influence of the magnet!

[1] This is one of the reasons why so many doctors (even at Nancy!) still prove impermeable to the theory of autosuggestion.

CHAPTER NINE

THE ACTION OF SLEEP

The action of sleep (we mean *natural* sleep) in relation to spontaneous suggestion requires special attention, for it is of considerable value in this connection.

Many persons are quite independent of the use of alarum clocks or other means of being called in the morning. When they are going to sleep they think of the hour at which they wish to rise, and they invariably wake at the appointed time. Others attempt this plan, and fail. For everything depends upon how the "thinking" is done. This word gives us no information as to the precise condition in which those persons who succeed in waking when they desire had spontaneously placed their minds overnight. But by the use of reflective suggestion, everyone can "think" in the right manner, and can with all requisite precision repeat this elementary experiment. Furthermore, without quitting the domain of spontaneous suggestion, there are few children who have not performed this same experiment on themselves when they have gone to sleep some evening obsessed with the thought of a great joy awaiting them on the morrow (for instance, the early start for a holiday journey). A child unable to wake at eight on ordinary school days will on this occasion be wide awake at five, ready to jump out of bed. The subconscious

never sleeps, and in the subconscious the prospective joy has been at work all night.

This form of suggestion may be conditional. For instance, the mother who will sleep through a thunderstorm, will awaken at her baby's least cry.

Thus, the idea we have in our minds as we fall asleep may be the starting-point of a suggestion which continues to operate during sleep. Certain dreams, certain nightmares, inspired by what we were reading before we went to bed, afford additional examples. Suggestions of this order may be realized with remarkable accuracy.

For example, as a part of some of the religions of antiquity, there was practised the art of invoking dreams which the subject ascribed to the gods, being unaware that he had caused them himself. Without dwelling upon the oracles of ancient Greece, where the priests had charms which could make the gods visible to the faithful in slumber (we verge here upon the field of hypnotic hallucination), we find in the worship of Hecate a singular example of spontaneous suggestion. After the performance of certain mysterious rites, the devotees of Hecate would have a vision of the goddess during their slumbers, provided that before going to sleep they had prayed to her in due form. They must follow the instructions of the goddess:

> My image purify, as I shall show:
> Of wild rue form the frame, and deck it o'er
> With lizards such as run about the house;
> These mix with resin, myrrh, and frankincense,
> Pound all together in the open air
> Under the crescent moon, and add this vow.

She sets forth the vow, and shows how many lizards are needed:

Take lizards many as my many forms
And do all this with care. My spacious house
With branches of self-planted laurel form.
Then to my image offer many a prayer,
And in thy sleep thou shalt behold me nigh.[1]

It is obvious that the strange and complex ritual prescribed for the preparation of the image must have favoured suggestion by making a powerful appeal to the imagination. The moon and the lizards are remarkably reminiscent of the stars and the toads in the Vaudois recipes for the charming away of warts and for the cure of dropsy.

At other times the suggestion (as in posthypnotic suggestion) has originated during sleep, in a dream, and is realized sooner or later after waking.

Here is the case of a Geneva girl whom I was treating in consultation with Pierre Bovet. She suffered from nervous troubles for which the combined action of autosuggestion and psychoanalysis seemed appropriate. She told us that in the morning she had fainted, a thing which had not happened to her for several years. Pierre Bovet then began the psychoanalytic investigation. During this, the patient recalled the fact that during the previous night she had dreamed that her father had fallen down in a fainting fit, and that this dream had made a strong impression on her mind.

Similarly, a man in perfect health dreamed that he was being operated on for appendicitis. Six months or a year later, he had an attack of this disease.

[1] Porphyry, quoted by Eusebius, Praeparatio Evangelica, Book V, Chapter XII.—The English translation is by E. H. Gifford, Eusebii Pamphili, Evangelicae Praeparationis, Oxford, 1903, Vol. III, p. 218.

It is obvious that in cases of this kind (if we assume the facts to be so accurately known that coincidence may be excluded) two alternative interpretations are possible. It may be supposed that the subconscious has intuitively grasped the imminence of certain lesions, the significance of certain organic predispositions; that it has deduced, has concluded, and has revealed its conclusions in the form of a dream. Even if this be so, it does not necessarily follow that the dream foreshadows the oncoming of an inexorable fate. It is no more than a suggestion favouring the realization of something that was perhaps threatening; but a countersuggestion may avert the trouble.

We must not suppose that what happens when we are asleep is radically different from what happens when we are awake. The foreshadowing idea, the "presentiment" that we are going to be ill, may likewise be inspired by an already existing lesion, by a predisposition to the disease. This idea is none the less a suggestion. The presentiment does not determine the future, for it may be neutralized by a countersuggestion, as we have already learned, and as we shall learn still more convincingly by and by.

Even when the subject has dreamed of events which subsequently come to pass, we must not be too ready to infer that the dream was "prophetic." Still less must we plunge into metaphysics; still less must we make the facile affirmation that absolute determinism is experimentally proved, saying that whatever is written is written. The considerations developed in Chapter VI relating to the effects of autosuggestion upon the actual course of events, will suffice to guard us against such hasty conclusions.

We have now examined:

1. Cases in which the suggestion had its origin when the subject was just falling asleep;

2. Cases in which the suggestion originated during sleep.

There are also cases of a more complex kind, more or less synthetic of 1 and 2. In these instances, the idea which is in the subject's mind just as he falls asleep, undergoes ramification during slumber; it becomes associated with other ideas requisite for its suggestive realization; during the period of sleep, and unknown to our conscious ego, complicated mental operations are performed.

For instance, we fall asleep puzzling over a sum, and wake to find it solved. The concentration of the attention before going to sleep has here determined the suggestion. Sometimes, as soon as the answer is found, it appears to the sleeper in the form of a dream, as when a number shows itself to him written on a blackboard. In other cases it wakens the subject in the middle of the night. Moreover, these occurrences are not limited to the solution of arithmetical and similar problems. A poet, unable to write an elusive stanza, will at night throw down his pen and leave the page blank. In the morning he will wake up to find the stanza ready in his mind. Sometimes, again, he will hear a voice dictating it to him while he dreams, and will awaken prematurely in order to note it down.

Finally, some question may be troubling us greatly when we go to sleep; but in the morning we find that our difficulties have vanished, and that our mind is made up. The wisdom of the nations has embodied this familiar experience in a proverb, "Night brings counsel."

These facts are well known, but we are too apt to dismiss them as exceptional or merely strange phenomena. We have failed, hitherto, to note their enormous significance, and to apply them as they might be applied.

CHAPTER TEN

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL CONCLUSIONS

(*The Laws of Suggestion*)

WHAT conclusions should now be drawn?

1. *Law of Concentrated Attention.*—The essential and invariable condition of spontaneous suggestion relates to the first phase of the process. *The idea which tends to realize itself in this way is always an idea on which spontaneous* ATTENTION *is concentrated,* or an idea which has been forced on the attention after the manner of an obsession. When the idea is subconscious, there is sometimes a transfer of obsession, a transfer of attention; this may at first throw us off the trail, but psychoanalysis will clear up the difficulty.

2. *Law of Auxiliary Emotion.*—As Ribot has shown, spontaneous attention is closely associated with our tendencies; it dwells on anything which is in conformity with them, or upon anything which conflicts with them; it naturally possesses, that is to say, a certain affective accompaniment. The more marked this affective accompaniment, the more strongly is suggestion favoured. *When, for one reason or another, an idea is enveloped in a powerful* EMOTION, *there is more likelihood that this idea will be suggestively realized.* In the course of the preceding examples, we have frequently seen emotion at

work. But there are typical cases in which this rôle of emotion appears in isolation, so that it is more conspicuous.[1]

We see this, for example, in stage fright, and in the terror of the examinee. A candidate who knows his subject perfectly well may suddenly be stricken with suggestive amnesia. In essence there is no difference between this and the forgetfulness of a proper name in ordinary conversation; but the examinee's amnesia is far more intense, its higher degree corresponding with the greater intensity of the emotion.

Violent emotion appears to heighten the force of suggestions of any kind. Intense fear may thus have two

[1] Fouillée, the philosopher who formulated the notion that "ideas are forces," advanced the principle that ideas act only through the instrumentality of sensibility.

Certain authors (Thorndike, for instance) have flatly denied the existence of ideomotor force. An idea as such, they say, is unable to work for its own realization; when this seems to happen, there is always an intermediary affective element. Since the pure idea is an abstraction, since in actual experience an idea invariably has an emotional colouring, it would seem a delicate matter to judge between the two theses. James Drever (Instinct in Man, A Contribution to the Psychology of Education, Cambridge University Press, 1917) opines that the decision is impracticable in the present state of our knowledge. Having deduced the consequences of Thorndike's hypothesis, he justly remarks that if it be true that there is no such thing as ideomotor force, suggestion (which is defined wholly in the terms of such a force) would no longer exist as a primary force, but would be reducible to other forces (instinct, affect, etc.). But it is obvious, as Drever himself shows, that until this reduction is possible (being assumed for the sake of argument to be possible), we must continue to look upon suggestion as a primary force. Though it may be possible that the laws of suggestion will some day be subsumed under other laws, this does not invalidate the

very different results, the divergence depending on the nature of the idea present in the mind. Fear may glue the feet to the ground. A motor dashes round the corner when you are walking in the middle of the road; you are afraid you will not be able to get out of the way in time, and consequently you cannot move a step. On the other hand, fear may restore the use of his legs to a paralytic. In 1915, in one of the air-raids on Paris, a paralyzed woman living on the fifth storey found herself in the porter's lodge on the ground floor, without knowing how she had got there; a bomb had exploded close at hand, and she had fled downstairs in a moment; the idea of flight at all hazards had seized her mind, and under the influence of the violent emotion this idea had been transformed into action.[1]

existing laws of suggestion; any more than the conception of weight is a figment because it proves to be nothing more than a particular instance of universal gravitation.

But in any case, the part played in suggestion by the affective element is considerable. Even Drever, whose views are ingenious, looks upon this affective element as a possible means for effecting the synthesis of the two meanings of the term suggestion (acceptation, and ideoreflex power). An idea, as its nature and the conditions varied, would transform itself, now into a belief, and now into an action. For like reasons, the idea would undergo transformation upon encountering in the subject, either an instinctive interest to be realized, or a deep-seated and uninhibited tendency which it could satisfy.

[Edward Lee Thorndike's book, referred to above, is Educational Psychology, briefer course, New York, 1915.—See Chapter VI.]

[1] In elucidation of this example, it is necessary to point out that in man, as in the lower animals, fear shows itself in two very different forms. In some cases fear stimulates to flight; in other cases fear stimulates to concealment and immobility.

Emotion, it might be said, instantaneously raises an idea to the boiling point, intensifies it to the degree when it can become an effective force.

3. *Law of Reversed Effort.*—Another law we have caught a glimpse of on several occasions runs as follows: *When an idea imposes itself on the mind to such an extent as to give rise to a suggestion, all the conscious efforts which the subject makes in order to counteract this suggestion are not merely without the desired effect, but they actually run counter to the subject's conscious wishes and tend to intensify the suggestion.* The efforts are spontaneously reversed so as to reinforce the effect of the dominant idea. Whenever anyone is in the state of mind, "I should like to, but I cannot,"[1] he may wish as much as he pleases; but the harder he tries, the less he is able.

This law of reversed effort is revealed in all its simplicity to everyone who is learning to ride a bicycle. When we are at length able to wobble painfully along, should we see a big stone lying in the middle of the road, we know that all our attempts to avoid it serve only to direct our steering wheel towards the obstacle, upon which it impinges with deadly precision. Thus we seem to search out even the smallest pebbles that are most remote from our proper course. Our desperate tugs at the handlebar avail us nothing. The stone has attracted our attention, our emotions are aroused, suggestion is

Thus there are two distinct types of fear, and English authors accordingly speak of the instinct for flight and the instinct for concealment. It would be an error to assert that any kind of emotion can intensify any kind of suggestion.

[1] The condition is often expressed by the phrase, "I can't help it."

at work, and our efforts to counteract it serve merely to reinforce it.

This is something more than a quaint experience. It is an illustration of a law valid for all the obstacles we have to encounter in our path through life.

4. *Law of Subconscious Teleology.*—Suggestion acts by subconscious teleology. *When the end has been suggested, the subconscious finds means for its realization.* In the search for expedients, it often astonishes us by its skill and sagacity. All is grist which comes to its mill, and it has no scruples about cheating. Coué gives me a typical example.

A chemist's assistant, having heard talk of the results of suggestion, wished to be hypnotized by Coué, who at that date still practised this method. But the subject had an overpowering fear that it might prove impossible to reawaken him, and had continually to be reassured upon the point. Sleep was induced. At the agreed signal he opened his eyes, but declared that he was blind. Coué treated the matter lightly, hypnotized him once more, and soon put the imaginary blindness to flight. How had it originated? Under the influence of an autosuggestion, the conviction " I shall never wake again." The hynotizer's suggestion that he should open his eyes did not fully dispel this conviction. While obeying the order, the subconscious found a way to realize the primitive autosuggestion through fraud. The simulated blindness was equivalent to the closure of the eyes characteristic of sleep, which was inhibited by a countersuggestion; this false blindness was therefore chosen as the next best thing to remaining asleep.

5. In addition to the four laws hitherto formulated, we may add that spontaneous autosuggestion is a phe-

nomenon of everyday occurrence. To the subject it is no whit inferior in importance to the classic form of hypnotic suggestion. Often, indeed, the results of spontaneous autosuggestion are far more intense and far more lasting than those of hypnotic suggestion. Moreover, the state of *natural* sleep is extremely favourable to the development of spontaneous autosuggestion.

6. Having dealt with theoretical conclusions, we may now pass to practice. We should keep watch on our spontaneous autosuggestions; we should track them to their lairs; we should, as the English phrase it, "control our thoughts," checking the "undesirable" ideas which would transform themselves into noxious suggestions (ideas of weakness, poverty, impending misfortune, illness). We should abstain from attempts to learn the future by consulting mediums and clairvoyants, whose fantastic prophecies will germinate in our minds into veritable suggestions, and will tend to realize themselves, so that a prophetess of misfortune may perchance prove an unwitting criminal. When we have occasion to refer to our habitual ailments, we should be careful always to employ the *past* tense, saying "I have slept badly of late;" instead of the customary present, "I am a bad sleeper," which condenses the present and the future, and involves the future just as much as if we were to say "I shall sleep badly to-night." Furthermore we should make it a rule to talk as little as possible about our ailments.[1] When we are asked how we are, it is better to reply "Quite well, thank you"—better not only that we may avoid aggravating our own troubles, but in

[1] "The Greeks had the excellent sense not to talk overmuch about their ailments." W. H. S. Jones, Malaria, London, 1907, p. 26.

order that we may avoid disseminating suggestive contagion. Speaking generally, we should turn our minds away from "undesirable" things. But how? Here lies the field for reflective suggestion.

PART TWO

REFLECTIVE SUGGESTION

CHAPTER ONE

THE LAW OF REVERSED EFFORT

THE study of spontaneous autosuggestion has taught us that, under certain conditions, an idea is able, unaided, to release a force which, by means of subconscious activities, can realize the idea. The key of the whole mechanism is the idea itself.

We ought, then, to be able to guide autosuggestion as we please. It is a natural force which we can court. When the idea is unfavourable, we can change it; when it is good we can reinforce it. We have merely to substitute for spontaneous attention that voluntary attention with which, as civilized adults, we are all familiar. But in practice the matter is by no means simple.

Let us return to the laws which we formulated at the close of Part I. Let us consider the first three of these laws, those which relate to the preliminary conditions requisite for suggestion, those which show what characters an idea must exhibit if it is to bring about its own realization. These are:

1. The law of concentrated attention;
2. The law of auxiliary emotion;
3. The law of reversed effort.

We are tempted to say: let us conform to these laws as the mechanical inventor conforms to the laws of mechanics. Let us voluntarily place ourselves in the conditions of which nature has set us the example, by realizing them spontaneously.

But a very little thought will reveal the difficulties in our path.

In the first place, the second law reminds us that emotion plays a considerable part in the production of suggestions. We think, above all, of faith cures, of cures due to faith in the healer; and we remember that faith heals in proportion as it is an emotional state. We recall the case in which paralysis was cured by the fear resulting from an aerial bombardment. And we are forced to the conclusion that, where voluntary suggestion is concerned, this potent adjuvant, *lively emotion*, will commonly be lacking. For, while we are familiar with voluntary attention, and know it to be no less puissant than spontaneous attention, we know nothing of voluntary emotion, seeing that emotion is, by definition, a passive state which cannot be manufactured to order. Unless, indeed, we can produce it voluntarily by suggestion? But here we are running ahead, and seem to have entered a vicious circle. For the nonce we must consider the possibilities of voluntary suggestion without the help of this auxiliary on which we were relying. Happily it was no more than an auxiliary, but how valuable a one!

We are left with the first law and the third, the law of concentrated attention and the law of reversed effort. These laws, separately considered, seem to offer no further difficulties. We can concentrate voluntary attention upon any physical or mental modification we please. As for the struggle summed up in the law of reversed effort, that apparently does not come into the question at all, since here our desires are in precise conformity with our thoughts.

But we must quit generalities, and must enter the

sphere of the concrete. The frequency of spontaneous suggestions, above all of bad ones, shows us that the first task of reflective suggestion must be to neutralize these noxious suggestions, to struggle against suggestions that are already in operation. Yet now, when we concentrate voluntary attention upon the good idea which we are to substitute for the bad idea, when we devote all our energies to this substitution, what will happen? A reversal of effort, nothing more. The harder we try to think the good idea, the more violent will be the assaults of the bad idea. It will be with us as it is with the neurasthenic who engulfs his limbs in the quicksand of neurasthenia because he is struggling to escape from it (p. 43); as it is with one obsessed who aggravates his obsession by endeavouring to throw it off; as it is with the drunkard whose best efforts to give up drinking serve merely to lead him to the nearest tap-room.

Voluntary suggestion, understood as we were inclined to understand it, therefore reveals itself, not as powerless, but as possessed of negative force in its rôle of countersuggestion. Must we limit its use to cases in which we are not at war with ourselves, to cases in which we merely wish to call into existence a mental or bodily state that does not conflict with any antecedent spontaneous suggestion?

But in these cases, too, the difficulty persists. Voluntary effort essentially presupposes the idea of a resistance to be overcome.[1] It comprises both action and reaction. The two notions are simultaneously present at

[1] Cf. Maine de Biran's analysis of effort in Part I, Section II of his Essai sur les fondements de la psychologie, Oeuvres inédites, 1859, Vol. I.

the moment of the effort. If, then (and this is a matter of the first importance), I concentrate voluntary attention on an idea, which implies my making an effort, I am simultaneously conscious of an action towards this idea, and of a resistance in consequence of which the idea continually tends to escape me, so that I must unceasingly recall my wandering attention.[1] According to Maine de Biran, the consciousness of effort synthetizes that of the ego and of the non-ego. We may add that, in the effort of voluntarily attending to an idea, our consciousness embraces at one and the same time thought and non-thought; or, let us say, our state of mind synthetizes, on the one hand, the idea, and, on the other hand, the resistance which this idea has to being thought.

In these circumstances, we do not think *a single idea,* but *two conflicting ideas.* And if our state of consciousness is sufficiently reinforced by attention for the origination of a suggestion to be possible, it is not *a single suggestion* that will result, but there will be *two conflicting suggestions* which will neutralize one another more or less perfectly.[2] The yield, therefore, will be far less copious than in the case of spontaneous suggestion. And if it should unfortunately happen that the sentiment of effort and resistance predominates, we shall

[1] Attention, as Ribot has shown, is never stable. It is an unceasing return of the mind to the object of attention.

[2] Herbert Parkyn writes (op. cit., p. 96): "As a matter of fact, it is impossible to concentrate the mind upon a single object for more than a few moments at a time. Voluntary concentration really consists in a repetition of successive efforts to bring back a subject to the mind." Parkyn, however, not having grasped the law of reversed effort, fails to draw from this observation the conclusions drawn in the text.

probably arrive at a negative result, the reverse of that which we desire, a result whose dimensions will be proportional to the efforts we have made to avoid it.[1]

Experience verifies what reason has led us to forecast. Every day we see novices in the practice of reflective suggestion begin by attaining contradictory results. The indicator of the balance swings, now in the right direction and now in the wrong; and when the task before us is to uproot a preëxistent suggestion, we frequently encounter a check at the outset. At this stage, therefore, many persons, unless they find an adviser who is able to explain to them the cause of their failure, are inclined to throw the handle after the hatchet.

The unprecedented success of the New Nancy School has been due to its having had these competent advisers, persons who have been able, experimentally and by brief verbal explanations, to throw light upon the vital point, to disclose the stumbling-block, and to help people past this initial difficulty. Coué's most original contribution, his stroke of genius, was, I consider, his discovery of the law of reversed effort. He did not give it a name; he did not find for it a definitive psychological formula; he did not analyze it. But he discovered it; and, leaving to others the study of its essential principle and its innumerable consequences, he passed without delay to its most urgent applications. Adopting a practical outlook, he gave to his law an incisive formulation

[1] When we vainly endeavour to write a stanza overnight, and in the morning find the stanza ready written in the mind, it is doubtless essential that our discouragement, that the sense of impotence which led us to throw down our rebellious pen, shall not have been too vivid when we were still trying to write.

so that it could make itself felt, could be graven on everyone's memory. He is careful to point out that the mathematical terminology employed in the formula is nothing more than a metaphor "which aims at making his thought intelligible." There is no implication that the law has the theoretical precision of Weber's and Fechner's law of sensation—Fechner's statement of this law assuming definite logarithmic form. To forestall obvious criticism, it is desirable to insist upon the reservation once again. Having pointed this out, we proceed to give Coué's formula in his own words:

"When the will and the imagination are at war, the imagination *invariably* gains the day.

"In the conflict between the will and the imagination, the force of the imagination is *in direct ratio to the square of the will.*"[1]

This law of reversed effort, revealed in its full power when the subject has to strive against a prior suggestion, is not peculiar to such instances. It operates in all suggestions wherein effort of will is the leading factor. As we have just explained, it is an outcome of the very nature of effort, and it is daily verified by Coué and his followers. If we enquire of the new "pupils," of those that have failed in their first attempts, concerning the manner in which they made their suggestions, we get some such answer as this: "I took a lot of pains; I tried as hard as I could." But as soon as the pupil is made to realize that herein precisely lies his error, he promptly begins to make headway.

Coué, therefore, has the best of reasons for drawing the following conclusion:

"Above all, the will must not intervene in the practice

[1] Op. cit., p. 10.

of autosuggestion. This recommendation is absolutely essential."

And a little farther on he writes:

"This observation is of capital importance. It explains why we get such unsatisfactory results, in the treatment of moral disorders, when we aim at the *reëducation of the will.* What we have to work for is the *education of the imagination.* It is thanks to this difference of method that I have often been able to attain success where others, persons of conspicuous ability, have failed."[1]

We are now able to understand how great an advance has been made from the position of Paul Emile Lévy, who looks upon autosuggestion as "the rational education of the will," and from that of Herbert Parkyn, who writes, "In developing voluntary concentration, light exercises in concentrating should be used at first, and if the practices be kept up regularly, it will become possible to impose greater and still greater tasks upon the mind."[2] It is obvious from what has been said above that in some cases autosuggestion based upon effort will have the desired result; but in many instances the result is negative, is the reverse of what we desire; and in any case it can never compete with the potency of spontaneous autosuggestion.

To sum up, autosuggestion operates in accordance with two essential laws, the law of concentrated attention, and the law of reversed effort. Now, in voluntary

[1] Op. cit., p. 10.

[2] Parkyn, op. cit., p. 95.—Consult, in addition, Bonnet, Précis d'auto-suggestion volontaire, Roussel, Paris, 1911. The subtitle of Bonnet's book is Education pratique de la volonté. This confusion is general among writers on the subject.

suggestion, these two laws are in conflict. The working of the second law tends to raze to the ground what we are building up by appealing to the first.

To secure comparatively stable results, therefore, for *voluntary* attention in the strict sense of the term we must substitute something else, which we are about to describe. But the reader will understand why we have rejected the phrase "voluntary suggestion." It involves to some extent a contradiction in terms.

Herewith we have indicated the chief innovation made by the New Nancy School, an innovation which will characterize this school and give it a definite place in history. With the law to which we have given the name of the law of reversed effort, Coué has introduced the elements of a positive revolution into the discipline of our mental activities. What we have to do, obviously, is not to *substitute* autosuggestion for the will, but to *superadd* autosuggestion to the will, as a very different mode of activity; as one which can gain desirable ends where the will fails to gain them or does so inefficiently; and as one which will only come to full fruition on condition *that it is not confused with voluntary effort.* What is the nature of this suggestion? That is the matter we have now to consider. Till to-morrow, or till a more distant future, must be left the elaboration of the manifold consequences with which the new idea is gravid.

CHAPTER TWO

THE OUTCROPPING OF THE SUBCONSCIOUS: RELAXATION

We are, therefore, faced with the following problem: *how to realize the conditions wherein the desired suggestion will come into being with the minimum of effort.* In other words, we have *to find an equivalent for voluntary attention* (in the sense in which physicists speak of the mechanical equivalent of heat), to discover a condition in which there will be no voluntary effort, or at least one in which voluntary effort will be minimal, but which will none the less be quite as competent as attention to keep our mind occupied exclusively or almost exclusively with a particular thought.

In practice, this problem was partially solved by all those who, consciously or unconsciously, were pioneers in the use of autosuggestion. They one and all refer more or less explicitly to a peculiar condition, to which various names have been given. To mention a few of these: Liébault speaks of *charm;* writers of the American and British schools, of *concentration;* Payot, the educationist, of *meditative reflection;* Paul Emile Lévy, of *collectedness* (recueillement); Bonnet of *autohypnosis.*

These authors do not all refer to precisely the same condition, but in every case the state of which they speak is more or less akin to sleep. It is characterized

by complete or partial immobility, and by partial suspension of some of the mental faculties. But serious confusion arises in so far as these authors have failed to make the law of reversed effort their starting-point; and in so far as they identify the state in question with an act of will, instead of contrasting it with an act of will. Some persons are fortunate enough to grasp the essential nature of this condition, and they are successful with autosuggestion. Others, following the books or guided by the advice of authorities, taking their stand upon the will, make efforts, and achieve nothing more than debatable results. For it is just as impossible to carry out suggestion through the instrumentality of the will as it is to write poetry by the rules of prosody; just as impossible (to use Bergsonian terminology) as it is for intelligence to do the work of intuition. We are dealing with different categories.

We shall more readily grasp the affinities of the condition favourable to reflective suggestion, if we recall our knowledge of the process of suggestion in general. There are, as we have learned, three phases in suggestion: during the second of these (preëminently dynamic), work, often a vast amount of work, goes on in the *subconscious*. This subconscious or unconscious, plays a conspicuous rôle in modern psychology, which is gradually revealing its attributes. The subconscious (the term does not mean an "inferior or subordinate consciousness," but a "hidden consciousness," a consciousness that lies at a lower level than the familiar consciousness of everyday life), is comparable, to use Pierre Janet's simile, to the deeper geological strata, those covered by the superficial and only visible stratum, to which

latter our ordinary consciousness may be compared. The subconscious is a storehouse of the memories that have lapsed from the ordinary consciousness, of the wishes and sentiments that have been repressed, of the impressions of a distant past. But it is far from being inert, for it contains in addition the subsoil waters which are unceasingly at work; it contains the suggestions which will well up into the open after their hidden passage. This is all imagery, but it serves, better than pure abstractions, to convey some notion of the complex reality we have learned to recognize in the subconscious.

Now there are times when, there are states in which, these lower strata, rising as in a wave, pierce the crust and crop out on the surface, so that the superficial consciousness is more or less submerged and the subconscious becomes apparent. Sleep is the most characteristic of these conditions. Psychoanalysis has definitely proved that the subconscious is revealed in sleep; that during sleep what has been repressed rises once more to the surface and becomes manifest in the form of dreams which can be remembered in the waking state. We know, moreover, that the dream is a flow of images infinitely swifter and more copious than the flow of the waking consciousness; we know that in a minute the dream consciousness traverses scenes in which the duration of several hours is simulated. The faculties of inhibition, decision, effort, ratiocination, will, and voluntary attention, appear to be in abeyance more or less; and everything happens in the dream consciousness as if these faculties, which during the waking state slacken the mental flow, had withdrawn their restraining influence.

But, quite apart from sleep, there are fairly stable

conditions in which, though the superficial consciousness is not wholly suppressed, there is a tendency to the outcropping of the subconscious. First of all comes the state betwixt sleep and waking, just before we fall asleep, and just before we are fully reawakened. In the daytime, again, we have the various conditions usefully subsumed under the name of *reverie,* which are in fact a miniature dream, a waking sleep. In reverie we abandon the struggle for life, we cease to control our thoughts, we give them free rein; once more the repressed rises towards the surface, there are waves of sadness or desire, deceptive images surging up from the depths of our being; so closely do these resemble dream images, that psychoanalysts turn them to equal account, discovering in them the disguised and symbolical expression of everything that we refuse to avow to ourselves. To sleep, declares Bergson, is to become disinterested. In like manner, to dream is to disinterest oneself from immediate material activities; it is to disregard, for the nonce, all adaptation to everyday life, to its utilitarian solicitations; it is to set sail upon the waters of the inner world.

We may add that people vary much as to the degree in which they display a tendency to the outcropping of the subconscious. Since the condition which favours this outcropping is one of release from tension, one of *relaxation* of attention and inhibition, all the causes which predispose to such relaxation may promote the outcropping of the subconscious. Thus it is that woman, as contrasted with man, seems to be in closer and more continuous touch with the subconscious. Hartmann affirmed this many years ago in his metaphysical terminology. Ribot gives a reason for it when he shows that

the effort of attention is a muscular effort which, like all muscular effort, induces fatigue more speedily in women than in men, so that relaxation ensues earlier in the former. Still greater, in this respect, is the contrast between children and adults.

Furthermore, there are certain temperaments[1] peculiarly well equipped for communication with the subconscious; to use Flournoy's metaphor, they are "artesian wells" wherein the subsoil waters rise spontaneously to the surface.

Examples are furnished by those who display mediumistic phenomena, such as hallucinations and automatic writing, phenomena shown by psychoanalysis to belong to the domain of the subconscious. Additional instances are afforded by artists, and particularly those with true artistic genius, who feel as if their creative work were "inspired" by some other mind than their own. In most of these cases, if we subject them to psychoanalysis, we can prove that the presiding energy is that of the subconscious.[2] The revelatory character of art is doubtless in most cases due to the fact that the artist gives expression to that which everyone conceals and dissimulates—and yet to that which everyone feels the need of expressing.

We have already seen that natural sleep favours sug-

[1] Such persons are characterized by exceptional and sometimes morbid sensibility of the nervous system.

[2] Psychoanalysis has been successfully applied to art, and above all to poetry. A whole literature has sprung up dealing with this subject. Shakespeare, Leonardo da Vinci, Lenau, myths, fairy tales, etc., have been psychoanalyzed.

Consult the bibliography in Régis and Hesnard, op. cit.

gestion. But the same may be said of all the states we have just been describing, for they all have certain physiological characters which they share with sleep. They are all characterized by *relaxation,* by a *suspension of inhibition,* by an *outcropping of the subconscious.* Persons of the types mentioned in the paragraphs immediately preceding are more sensitive than others, not only to induced suggestion (this is a familiar fact), but also to spontaneous suggestion and to *reflective suggestion.* Such persons are the quickest to grasp the principles and methods of reflective suggestion, and are those who make the most rapid progress.

But, some will object, if this be so, then reflective autosuggestion is dangerous, for it requires a relaxation of the active and "higher" faculties. To practise it successfully we must model ourselves upon the weaker kinds of temperament, upon women, children, and artists. However, this objection involves a vicious circle of argument, for autosuggestion likewise is an active and creative faculty, and is in many instances more powerful than the ordinary will. You may speak of it, if you like, as a different kind of will, as a force which is latent in "weaker temperaments." There are certain persons whom we look upon as persons of "weak temperament" because they are autosuggestible and because they are continually the victims of pernicious autosuggestion. But from the day when the key to suggestion is given them, the force which was fighting against them becomes their best ally, and we see these same individuals perform prodigies of energy. A knowledge of suggestion discloses to us that in the persons in whom we had glimpsed a taint of impotence, there really exists a power with which the will we pride

ourselves on so greatly is in many instances unable to compete. Moreover, when we grasp with increasing clearness the existence of our states of relaxation and reverie, it does not follow that thereby we have enfeebled our will and reduced our power of attention. It would be as reasonable to say that sleep reduces our muscular energy when, precisely on account of the relaxation that takes place in sleep, it recuperates that energy. In a word, the will is one kind of force, and suggestion is another; their respective rôles will be explained more clearly in the sequel; but we must not suppose that in working for the acquirement of the power of autosuggestion, we are risking the loss of the power of the will, that we are throwing away the substance for the shadow. Far from it, autosuggestion, as soon as we have made it our own, will become a means for the fuller development of all our faculties, including the will.

A passing observation is requisite here. It is admitted that women, whose character is in certain respects feebler than that of men, nevertheless display at times the most marvellous endurance and energy. From this some psychologists have inferred that the "will" of women is, potentially at least if not in actual operation, superior to that of men. But when, on the other hand, we are told that effort is muscular, that the will is in large measure inhibition, and that muscular energy and the faculty of inhibition are less in women, we find ourselves involved in flagrant contradiction. This contradiction disappears if we consider the miracles of feminine energy as autosuggestive rather than as voluntary phenomena, as nervous rather than muscular; as phenomena in whose production the subconscious plays a great part—a fact which does nothing to lessen their

value.[1] Contrariwise, for what may we not expect when we have gained methodical control over the force which, in spontaneous action, has already worked such miracles?

In the states and temperaments we have been describing, there is usually a heightened emotional susceptibility. Reciprocally, again, it is possible that every emotion is a condition characterized by the outcropping of the subconscious, by a sort of earthquake which convulses the whole being, bringing the deeper strata to the surface. In certain emotional states the rapidity of the stream of consciousness recalls what occurs in dreams. Emotion is likewise an instigator of images,[2] a condition in which the inhibitive faculties appear to be thrown out of gear. Without embarking upon hypotheses which would for the moment be sterile, without asking whether the outcropping of the subconscious operates upon suggestion through the instrumentality of the heightened emotional susceptibility by which it is accompanied, or whether, on the contrary, the emotion operates in virtue of the outcropping which it seems to occasion; without enquiring to what extent this activity depends upon the nervous system, and what nervous or other modifications are characteristic of it—let us confine ourselves to pointing out the close relationship which exists between the two states, between, on the one hand, outcropping of the subconscious in association with increased emotional sus-

[1] By what right should muscle be regarded a priori as "superior" to nerve? The only right that occurs to me is the right of the stronger.

[2] This is especially noticeable in the poet, for the images flow from his pen more spontaneously, more vigorously, and more rapidly, in proportion as his emotion is more intense.

ceptibility, and, on the other, suggestibility (or auto-suggestibility).

Everything takes place as if suggestion, in order to bear fruit, must be buried in the subconscious; and as if this fruition were facilitated by the outcropping of the subconscious.

We are now beginning to realize in what direction we must seek the desired equivalent for voluntary attention, and the key to reflective suggestion. First of all we have to make use of, and in case of need to induce, conditions in which the outcropping of the subconscious occurs. The ways of doing this will now be considered.

CHAPTER THREE

EDUCATION OF THE OUTCROPPING:

COLLECTEDNESS

From what has gone before, it may at once be inferred that *the education of the outcropping* will make the soil favourable for the germination of suggestions.

Pathological or exceptional phenomena are in many instances magnifications of the normal. Now in the case of persons endowed with mediumistic faculty, in those who have the power of automatic writing for instance, there has been an education of the outcropping. The subject, by the frequent repetition of an exercise, "develops himself," thus rendering increasingly supple the mechanism by which the subconscious manifests itself. But in ordinary life, without any departure from conditions that are perfectly normal, such an education is no less possible.

At moments when we have a little leisure, when we are free from the pressing demands of outward activity, at times when we have a right to repose, let us abstain from the search for some futile distraction, let us refrain from absorbing toxins from the newspapers, and let us, instead, use our spare time for the education of the outcropping. Let us practise ourselves (nothing is easier or less tiring) in summoning the subconscious, without going to sleep, but so as to become accustomed to these

mixed states, wherein the ordinary consciousness is not completely annulled, but wherein it ceases to form a rigid cortex and becomes a transparent veil. In place of seeking repose in *distraction,* which rests the attention by changing its object, but continues to keep the attention employed, let us seek repose in *relaxation,* in which the attention no longer tries to fix itself on anything. Then the most inward, the most repressed conditions, begin to pass through the mind in the form of evanescent images, of mobile and rapid reveries. This will at the same time teach us to avoid making any effort, and effortlessness is a habit we must acquire if we are to practise autosuggestion. A good way of bringing about the requisite relaxation of the mind is to immobilize the body, or, to speak more strictly, to relax the muscles, for muscular relaxation seems to generalize itself and to promote the relaxation of the muscles of attention.[1] Any kind of meditation in which we withdraw into ourselves without making too much effort to think, is a form of outcropping.

It will also be understood that when we recommend that relaxation should be substituted for distraction, we do not, in speaking of "distractions," think of those higher forms of art to which this term is often improperly applied. Etymologically, to distract signifies to draw asunder, and applied to our minds it means to

[1] When Baudouin speaks of the muscles of attention, he is thinking mainly of the optic muscles which come into play when we fix our eyes on anything to which we attend. This is based on Ribot's demonstration that the effort of attention is a muscular effort. See above, pp. 154–155. But presumably the inward faculty of attention can be "exercised" apart from any muscular training.—TRANSLATORS' NOTE.

draw the mind from one thing to another. But true art has a very different function. It helps us to live within ourselves; it helps the subconscious to rise to the surface. In the passivity, in the hypnosis (as Paul Souriau terms it), into which we are plunged by the contemplation of a masterpiece, we have perhaps the best, the most ideal example of outcropping.

Artistic education, everything which promotes the general culture of the imagination, everything which teaches us to dream, to withdraw so effectually from the outer world that it no longer seems to exist for us (but without the voluntary effort that accompanies reflection properly so called)—all these things bring about the education of the outcropping.

In the education of children, nothing could be more erroneous than to believe that in them imagination is an imperfect form of reason, so that imagination must be suppressed and must be replaced by the perfected reason. Imagination is something very different from a larval form of reason. It has its rights side by side with and independently of reason; it is a precious force for the individual, were it only as a medium for the outcropping of the subconscious and as a precondition of suggestion. We must teach children to do justice to all their faculties; they must not let any one faculty encroach; they must not, for example, allow imagination to usurp the place of reason; they must cultivate every faculty, imagination as much as the rest, nay, more than the rest. Fairy tales, which certain "positive"-minded pedants would like to proscribe, are the starting-point of artistic education, and should on no account be neglected.

The state of outcropping induced by a willed (but not

voluntary[1]) relaxation constitutes what we shall speak of as *collectedness* [recueillement]. At first sight there will seem to be a contradiction between these two terms, *collectedness* and *relaxation,* but the contradiction is apparent merely. As soon as the attention is relaxed, it becomes possible for all our inner life to flow together, to collect itself within us. Attention, if you like to phrase it thus, is dispersed over a large number of states of consciousness; but, conversely, these states are gathered together under the mind's eye, in so far as they can be gathered together. It is in this sense that we are "collected." We have gathered up our states, as the ears of corn are gathered up to form a sheaf; or rather, they have gathered themselves together into a sheaf.

Let us add, finally, that psychoanalysis, above all in the form of autopsychoanalysis, constitutes a methodical education of the outcropping, for the simple reason that it is continually calling up the subconscious. In this sense, there can be no question that the analysis of our dreams and memories by psychoanalytic methods (which cannot here be described in detail) is a most valuable habit.

But artistic education, the development of reverie, and the practice of psychoanalysis, will be greatly facilitated and reinforced by autosuggestion as soon as we know how to undertake it. Thus autosuggestion will favour the conditions which favour it in their turn, each acting and reacting on the other, accelerating their mutual progress.

Let us, therefore, practise relaxation whenever we can.

[1] This relaxation is the outcome of a decision of the will, but a decision in virtue of which the will abdicates for a season. "Relaxation" is precisely this abdication.

With habit it will grow increasingly familiar. The subconscious will become more neighbourly, and will answer more quickly to our call, without our finding it requisite to fly to any narcotic. The habit of collectedness will enable us to dispense with the use of opium, of alcohol, or of the still more soothing tobacco.

To facilitate this collectedness, at the outset at least, we must by preference choose conditions in which we shall be disturbed as little as possible by external stimuli; we must select moments when silence prevails around us. Whenever possible, the body should be motionless, the muscles relaxed; we lie on a couch or lean back in a comfortable arm chair; we close our eyes. For *exercises* in collectedness these conditions are more or less optional; but they are essential when autosuggestions are to be made. Thus we shall realize the maximum of relaxation; thus we shall attain the highest possible degree of collectedness.

In the foregoing pages, the writer has paid his tribute to the privileged mental position of certain temperaments, women, children, and artists being typical of these. It is possible that antifeminists, pedantic pedagogues, and devotees of an overstrained "positivism," will find his remarks a trifle irritating, as invalidating some of their favourite arguments. But it is none the less true that the outcropping which is the essential characteristic of such temperaments must be cultivated by all who desire to avail themselves of the powers of well-controlled autosuggestion. If this implies a plea for nerve against the tyranny of muscle, so much the worse for those who contend that sport is the primary factor of civilization.

CHAPTER FOUR

A PSYCHOLOGICAL EQUIVALENT FOR ATTENTION: CONTENTION

Collectedness however, with the relaxation and the outcropping which characterize it, is no more than a preliminary stage. We were in search of an equivalent for attention, and it would be remarkable were we to find this equivalent in relaxation, which is the converse of attention. We have to realize a state in which thought is sufficiently intense or sufficiently exclusive to make its power felt by the origination of a suggestion. But in the reverie which issues from relaxation, thought is scattered, mobile, and in a perpetual flux.

Now, if we are in this condition, what happens when our attention is claimed by a new stimulus, as for instance by a noise, or by some haunting thought which returns like the shooting of an intermittent pain? Something very remarkable takes place, and in current parlance we are said *to awake from our dream.* The moving swarm of mental images suddenly vanishes, as when the lighted pictures vanish from the cinematographic screen. We are confusedly aware that a moment before we were in a world abundantly stocked with mental life, but we have forgotten what was passing in that world. A few only of the more striking images continue to emerge from the void; they are fleeting outlines, disconnected and lifeless. Thus, without transitional stages,

our consciousness steps abruptly from marked expansiveness to an extreme contraction. Even the very last images of the series have almost disappeared. Their passage was doubtless too rapid, when they were no longer hemmed in by the barrier of attention; they could not fix themselves in the memory. (We know, in fact that attention is one of the conditions indispensable to memorization. When attention is relaxed, memory becomes enfeebled; when we wish to learn by heart, we must begin by attending.) On the other hand, when we "awake from our dream" we feel as if we had returned from a great distance; we are like a diver who has come back to the surface. As Bergson would phrase it, we pass from one plane of consciousness to another. We break the net of associated ideas in which we were enmeshed; and since there is now no association between the present and the immediate past, it is very difficult for the one to call up the memory of the other.

Whatever the causes of this phenomenon, we here encounter something that is comparatively rare in our mental life. Ordinarily the past prolongs itself into and merges in the present, so that we cannot grasp an isolated state of consciousness, unless we can isolate one by a somewhat violent act of attention. But here we have the impression of a mental vacuum. Nothing is present in consciousness beyond the stimulus which recalled us to ourselves, the noise, the thought, or whatever it may have been; nothing but this with its immediate associates, the cause of the noise, the memory of some particular person, or the like. Unless we violently strain our attention, the state of mind remains in comparative isolation.

The same phenomenon is still more conspicuous when

we awaken from a sound sleep. The dream upon which our mind was occupied usually lapses into complete oblivion. Yet, as everyone who has practised the analysis of his dreams is well aware, the dream was there. Auguste Forel writes: "I believe, on the other hand, that we all dream continuously when we are asleep. When I am unexpectedly aroused from sleep at any hour of the night, I can invariably seize the last broken link of a chain of dreams. But I forget it speedily unless I make a note of it or vigorously revive the memory when awake."[1] So instantaneous, however, is the oncoming of oblivion, that many persons believe they have not dreamed; and the moment of waking is practically a moment of mental vacuity, when consciousness takes an entirely fresh start. It is true that in most of our reawakenings the objects which first strike our senses are familiar to us. Their associative ramifications, which we are accustomed to traverse, promptly recall us to the framework of our daily life and to the matters with which our mind was occupied the day before. But the first time we awake in a strange bed, amid unfamiliar surroundings, we are apt to be utterly bewildered. Our perceptions tell us nothing, or almost nothing. The mind remains inert, contemplating these dumb perceptions, failing to grasp the identity of things, for there are no associations to set it in motion along the timeworn

[1] Op. cit.—Here is the original German: "und glaube vielmehr, dass alle Menschen im Schlaf fortwährend träumen. Man kann mich z. B. zu keiner Nachtstunde noch so unerwartet wecken, ohne dass ich wenigstens das letzte Bruchstück einer Traumkette erwische, das ich aber sogleich wieder total vergesse, wenn ich es nicht sofort aufschreibe oder mir im Wachzustand energisch wieder vorstelle."

paths. A single mental state, or it may be a small group of mental states, rises in the mental void and seems to occupy the entire field of consciousness. The mind is like a stagnant pool; in the absence of any fresh current of images and ideas, it tends to remain stable. We are justified in describing the condition as one of mental immobility, of monoideism, one-ideadness, provided always that we are careful not to construe these terms in too absolute a sense, but merely as representing a considerable approximation to the reality.

Here we have a mental state wherein attention, with infinitesimal effort, realizes an exclusivism which, in the normal condition, can be realized solely at the cost of considerable effort. To this state, for which collectedness has paved the way, we may give the name of *concentration,* a term which, in the sense above defined, now forms part of the vocabulary of the subject under discussion. But if we use this word, we must define it more carefully than do the Americans, who sometimes identify concentration with close voluntary attention, and sometimes with relaxation, so that in the end the term becomes quite unmeaning. The confusion arises out of the very nature of these various conditions which border upon one another so closely, and which pass into one another by brusque transitions at times, so that at first sight it is not always easy to know with what we are dealing.

If we prefer to find another name, that of *contention* may be suggested for this peculiar form of attention, which is neither "attention" properly so called (tension towards an end), nor yet "relaxation" [in the French, "détente," i e. the discharge or relaxation of attention]. In contention, the idea is, as it were, folded back upon itself, and maintains itself in the field of consciousness

without any sensible effort on our part. In these conditions, there is spontaneously secured that *intensity* of the idea which we set out to seek. *Contention* (*concentration*) *is a psychological equivalent of attention, minus effort.*

To realize this condition, we must begin by realizing the preparatory outcropping, either by the deliberate attainment of collectedness or else by turning to account the spontaneous outcropping which characterizes the passage from waking to sleep and from sleep to waking. At such a time, we must, with the minimum of effort, permeate the mind with the idea of the desired modifications. Autosuggestion during the moment of first waking and during the last moments before we go to sleep is particularly valuable—the latter above all, for the machinery then set in motion has the precious assistance of slumber.

"Many of us," wrote Paul Emile Lévy a few years ago, "must have observed how favourable to the birth and ripening of new ideas is the drowsy state just before or just after sleep. We are really in a condition of slight hypnosis, but it is profound enough to be characterized by increased suggestibility. Besides, every one can judge for himself, and can push the sleep to the stage which he finds most propitious. These hours, when we are able to make use of them in such a way, are those most favourable to autosuggestion.

"After no more than a few days' practice of these exercises in slight hypnosis and autosuggestion, we note that the mind concentrates itself upon the matter with far more facility, and that, concomitantly, autosuggestion grows at once more potent and easier."[1]

[1] Op. cit.

We may add that, thanks to the law of reversed effort, it becomes more potent *because* it is easier. And the reason why it becomes easier is that the effort to think along the desired lines, which is still appreciable at the outset, becomes insignificant as soon as, by practice, we have acquired the requisite suppleness. The "muscles of attention," like all the muscles, speedily become habituated to their task.

This teaches us that if, as we have pointed out, training in relaxation is indispensable, training in effort none the less has its uses. One who has accustomed himself to making great efforts during the ordinary waking state, and more particularly one who has accustomed himself to making great efforts of attention, will find that the slight effort of contention comes much more easily to him than it comes to other people, and that for this reason contention will more speedily attain its end. It follows that the various "exercises in concentration" in the waking state, exercises recommended by American authors, are by no means devoid of value. Speaking generally, all mental or scientific work, all methodical and regular memorization, will be found excellent for training the mind to make efforts in attention, so that attention grows more and more easy. We may, therefore, follow the advice of Herbert Parkyn:

"One of the best and simplest practices for developing concentration is to read a sentence in a valuable scientific work, the subject matter of which, in itself, is absolutely unattractive, and then endeavour to reproduce the idea expressed in the sentence, either verbally or in writing, or both. Having succeeded in obtaining, memorizing, and reproducing the idea expressed in the sentence, try several sentences at a time. Next take whole paragraphs,

then pages, then chapters, and finally a whole book. There is no better exercise in memorizing and concentrating than this.'' [1]

It may be added that all exercises which promote muscular development in general, all those which favour the growth of muscular energy, have their uses, provided that the pupil never neglects the special training of the attention.

But the training of effort in general and of attention in particular are strongly recommended by many authorities, and therefore, without wishing to minimize their importance, we are inclined rather to lay stress upon their complements which are too often neglected. It is our task to emphasize the value of relaxation, of outcropping, of contention.

Contention (*concentration*) *is, as it were, a crossways where two contraries meet, attention and relaxation. It simultaneously presupposes the habit of attention and that of relaxation.*

Everyone, therefore, should cultivate both attention and relaxation; and each must judge for himself by personal experience whether he needs to devote peculiar care to one or the other. Most people are especially lacking in the power of relaxation; and this statement is more applicable to men than to women, to adults than to children. On the other hand, no one should neglect the training of attention; and in this case it is women rather than men, children rather than adults, in whom the faculty is deficient.

To realize contention and to render suggestion effica-

[1] Op. cit., p. 97.

cious, we shall therefore choose, by preference and on principle, the moments betwixt sleep and waking, either before or after slumber. At such times, beginners will often find that contention is weak or unstable; that the idea of physical or mental improvement, instead of remaining in the mind, is speedily dissipated. The experimenter lapses into reverie, and in an instant the vagrant mind is thinking of anything in the world except what is desired. Sleep is too close at hand, and relaxation predominates over contention. If this should happen, the subject must for a time practise collectedness in the fully waking state. The condition, in this case, is less profound; but the experimenter is fully conscious of what he is doing, and is therefore master of his thoughts. We should take the opportunity of suggesting to ourselves that henceforward the morning and evening suggestions will be more easily realized, and that the desired state will come into existence spontaneously. If we find, in this waking collectedness, that the difficulty still continues, it will be because we have not sufficiently trained our powers of attention, and in that case such exercises as those recommended by Parkyn may be of considerable value.

In general, however, we shall attain perfection if we reiterate the suggestion, making it an absolutely regular daily practice. As with all such training, muscular or mental, this regularity is the first of all essentials; and the student need not be disheartened by his clumsiness in the early stages.

For the rest, the above is a mere preliminary outline of reflective suggestion. In practice, it has to be reinforced by the simple procedures now to be described.

CHAPTER FIVE

AUTOHYPNOSIS

OUTCROPPING, somnolence, even sleep, can be brought about by a means which we have not hitherto described, namely, by immobilization of the attention. When the attention has been immobilized for a long time upon a single object, it relaxes itself spontaneously, in part from loss of interest, and in part, doubtless, from fatigue.

In summary classification, it may be said that there are two main kinds of immobilization of the attention:

1. Fixation;
2. Seesaw.

In fixation proper, the attention is exclusively or almost exclusively occupied by a single sensation. In the case of vision, for example, this may be the contemplation of a luminous point, a vivid sensation which has an attractive influence, standing out in a privileged manner against a confused or dark background. In the case of hearing, it may be some monotonous and continuous stimulus, like the roar of a waterfall or the confused noise emanating from a great crowd.

As to immobilization by seesaw, we have examples of this in the noise of the waves beating on the shore, where two splashing sounds of different pitch answer one an-

other in an alternating song; in the tick-tack of a pendulum, where the alternation is between sound and silence; in lullabies; and in any kind of regular rhythm. As Bergson puts it, the attention "oscillates between two fixed points," between two haunting sensations continually repeated.

What happens in these cases is well known. When the attention has been held for a long time, it grows weary. In the end we can no longer see what we are looking at, we can no longer hear what we are listening to; relaxation ensues. This relaxation may pass on into sleep.

But the outcropping thus produced seems to differ to some extent from the forms of outcropping hitherto described. We are, in fact, aware that an obsessive idea or impression which is in the mind when we fall asleep, dominates the whole period of slumber. The fruitfulness of overnight suggestions proves the universal validity of this principle. We have likewise seen it unmistakably at work in the case of the sum which was unsolved when we went to sleep, and which is ready solved when we wake in the morning; and we have seen it at work in the ease with which many persons can awake at an hour dictated by autosuggestion. The method is of very wide application, as anyone can satisfy himself by the simple practice of autosuggestion, which will prove far more convincing than any theoretical demonstration. It applies, moreover, to all the states of somnolence and outcropping, just as much as to profound slumber. Consequently, the states that result from immobilization of the attention are not likely to be psychologically identical with the states of relaxation pure and simple which were given as primary examples. Experience here confirms

theory. In states resulting from immobilization of the attention, the idea of mental immobility remains dominant; from the first, we spontaneously suggest to ourselves this mental immobility. Consequently, although relaxation is in general characterized by reverie, by undirected thinking, by mobility, in these particular instances mental immobility is readily reëstablished at the slightest solicitation, contention is favoured.

To such states of outcropping, produced by immobilization of the attention, we propose to apply the name of HYPNOSIS.

This definition of hypnosis is no more arbitrary than our definition of suggestion. It will justify itself when we come to speak of induced sleep. We shall see that the characteristic fact, in the great majority of cases universally described by the name of *hypnosis,* is the preliminary immobilization of the attention; and wherever we find this cause at work, wherever we find it leading to outcropping, we are entitled to speak of hypnosis.

Hypnosis facilitates suggestion because it favours contention.

Obviously, when autosuggestion is our aim, the hypnosis must not be pushed to the stage of profound sleep, in which we shall no longer be able to control the direction of our thoughts. But a moderate degree of hypnosis may be recommended for this purpose.

The presence of a watch or a clock not far from the ear has a lulling influence. On suitable occasions, we may take advantage of the neighbourhood of a waterfall, a stream, the seashore; or we may, in more modest fashion, turn to account the drip from a water-tap that is imperfectly closed. Or, in a dark room, we may fix the gaze on a luminous point, on the motionless flame of a night-

light, or on the flickering firelight. Everyone who has passed a vigil in a sickroom must be familiar with the hypnotic influence of the last named. Psychotherapeuts with a taste for complicated recipes tell us that a peculiarly fascinating influence is exerted by the flickering flame of a spirit-lamp when a large pinch of hemp flowers has been macerated in the spirit for twenty-four hours. For a few minutes or more we concentrate our gaze upon the flame or the luminous point, and when the eyes are tired out, we allow them to close.

It matters little what process is chosen, or what simultaneous processes are employed.[1] The value is not to be found so much in this or that recipe as in the principles of which they are the respective applications. Each one of us can think out for himself new and more practical applications, better adapted to the circumstances. The governing principle is the immobilization of the attention, either by fixation or by seesaw.

But, above all, we must be careful that the possibility of using physical adjuvants does not make us the slaves of outward circumstances. Already, indeed, we are far too much enslaved by such circumstances, thanks to the dogmas implanted in us by a short-sighted medical science from the sixteenth century down to our own day —a medical science which is ignorant of the better half of the human personality and is itself the worst of all suggestions.

Furthermore, physical procedures are not the only methods for the production of autohypnosis. The attention may be immobilized in other ways than by an outward sensation. Immobilization can be brought

[1] Vision may be monopolized by a visual stimulus while simultaneously hearing is monopolized by an auditory stimulus.

about by a mental image, by an idea. Some can send themselves to sleep by counting, or by telling their beads, this being a sort of inward lulling. The verbal images evoked in such a manner arise spontaneously, without effort, owing to the fact that we have evoked them countless times since childhood. The will is no more actively concerned than in the case of the luminous point, the flickering of the fire, or the sound of the waterfall. Attention, once directed, clings from a sort of attraction. Sometimes sleep ensues; and failing that, a certain somnolence is invariable. If we practise the method in the evening, when we are already sleepy, it is ten chances to one that the coming of sleep will be greatly favoured. If this does not happen the first time, it will happen after a few days' regular practice.

We must be careful to note that immobilization of the attention, if it is to produce its proper effect, must be carried out with no sense of strain; we must be able to maintain it with the minimum of voluntary effort. In fact, when we have to do with external sensations of the type described above (the luminous point, the waterfall, etc.), our attention is in the end held in spite of ourselves. An effort, rather, is needed to disengage it. The flame of the nightlight will have produced the requisite impression when we find ourselves contemplating it in a state of mind which we wish only to prolong. We are doubtless able to turn our eyes away, but we have no desire to do so. The condition is analogous to that in which people often find themselves on first waking in the morning; they say to themselves that they could get up if they liked, but almost against their will they continue to snuggle under the blankets. It is when this state has been attained that we may allow our eyes to close, and

may proceed to call up in the mental void the ideas which form the object of our suggestions.

In like manner, when, wishing to immobilize the attention, we employ for this purpose an internal state instead of an outward sensation, *it is essential that the attention should remain* SPONTANEOUSLY *immobilized.* This is what happens when we tell our beads or count a series of numbers, for here habit takes the place of the will, and the monotony of the internal utterance acts like the monotony of the ticking clock or the running water.

This consideration should always guide us in the search for new methods of autohypnosis.

As one of the curiosities of history, and further as a lesson in humility, we may point out that the states just described under the names of collectedness, contention, and autohypnosis, are described, with considerable psychological acumen though not of course in modern psychological terminology, in the precepts by which, for centuries past, the yogis of Hindustan have been accustomed to attain self-mastery.[1]

The two states whose acquirement must be the novice's first aim are known as "prâtyâhâra" (mental examination) and "dhâranâ" (concentration of the mind upon a thought).

In the precepts relative to the former state, which is preparatory to the latter, we read:

"Seat yourself for a while and allow your thought to take its own course freely. It behaves like a frisky monkey. Let the monkey jump about; wait and take note. Your thought will entertain ugly ideas, so ugly that you will be surprised. But day by day, these err-

[1] Cf. Ernest Bosc de Vèze, Traité de Yoga, Daragon, Paris, 1908.

ings will become less numerous and less extensive. During the first months you will have a thousand thoughts; then you will have no more than seven hundred; and the number will progressively diminish."

It would be difficult to give a better description of the reverie which follows relaxation, and of the rapidity of the stream of consciousness in this condition. But "wait and take note"; substitute patient exercise for voluntary effort; and contention will be born out of the scatterbrain confusion.

As for autohypnosis, we encounter it in yoga, but tinged with mysticism. The sacred word AUM is repeated a myriad times, the three sounds A—U—M' being well separated, and uttered on the respective notes do—mi—sol. This, we are told, produces a mental transformation in the subject, which is preparatory to great spiritual progress.

Let us return to autohypnosis, as described earlier in our own text. Since it can be induced by immobilizing the attention on a mental state, why should we not choose, for this mental state (in preference to the bead-telling or to the counting), the very idea which is to be the object of the suggestion?

There is, in fact, no reason to the contrary, provided that the idea fulfils the requisite conditions, provided that it holds the attention rather than that the attention holds it. We must be able to think of it mechanically; ere long in spite of ourselves, as if we were obsessed by it; in the same way as that in which we listen to the sound of running water.

A very simple means of securing this is to condense the idea which is to be the object of the suggestion, to

sum it up in a brief phrase which can readily be graven on the memory, and to repeat it over and over again like a lullaby. The state of hypnosis thereupon ensues, with the effortless contention characteristic of the condition. We pass unawares into the preliminary stage of hypnosis. Relaxation occurs without our noticing it; reverie is neutralized by the presence of an idea which makes around itself a mental void. The states we have analyzed above are now synthetized into a single state which shares the characters of them all; which exhibits phases recalling now one, now another; but which differs from each. This condition is one of preëminent autosuggestibility. If we graft it upon a condition of spontaneous outcropping, as upon the morning and evening states bordering upon sleep, we shall obtain maximum results. But it may also be usefully attained during the waking hours. This method of repeating a phrase has often been recommended by American writers.

If we employ the term *contention* in the sense previously explained, we may reserve the name *concentration* for the synthetic state now described. It is superfluous to have two names for the same concept. We shall therefore define concentration as follows. *Concentration is a state of autohypnosis and of persistent contention with one idea, the autohypnosis having been induced by the lulling influence of the idea on the mind.* Moreover, this condition, like every synthesis, is far simpler in its concrete reality than it seems to be in the explanations and definitions we have to employ when we are describing it.

Let us add that, to prevent the mind from wandering, it may be well to repeat the phrase aloud, or at least to sketch its pronunciation with lips and tongue as we utter

it mentally. This motor accompaniment favours the acquirement of the habit we wish to form; gives it a certain solidity; and acts as a leash or leading string whereby, without effort, our thought is guided towards its object.

CHAPTER SIX

GENERAL RULES FOR THE PRACTICE OF AUTOSUGGESTION

We are now familiar with the practical principle upon which all reflective autosuggestion is based.[1] But when we reconsider all that we have said on the subject, it is natural that some anxiety should arise concerning the amount of time which it may be necessary to devote daily to the practice of autosuggestion. Concentration, as defined at the close of the preceding chapter, presupposes that the object of suggestion has been condensed into a brief phrase, one which the memory can retain without appreciable effort. It would seem from this as if the suggestion could apply only to a restricted object, and that a fresh "sitting" would be necessary for each particular case: one suggestion to overcome shyness; another to cure headache; another to quicken the healing of

[1] In common parlance the word "suggestion" is sometimes employed to denote the process as a whole, comprising all its three phases integrally considered; and sometimes to denote the first phase alone. Thus we are said "to suggest something to ourselves" when we propose to our mind an idea which is to act as the starting-point of a suggestion. No serious inconvenience arises from this double use of the term, for the context always makes the meaning clear. Still, when we deal with the opening phase only, it would be better to speak of "formulating" or "initiating" a suggestion. We do not actually "make" a suggestion until it is successful.

a sluggish wound; and so on. This is, indeed, the way in which most authors expound the methods of autosuggestion. We quote in full, as an example, Géraud Bonnet's prescription for the cure of stage fright.

"Let us suppose that, on some approaching day, you have to sing at a private party or on a public platform.

"You have a good voice, and you are quite familiar with what you have to sing; you know that the audience will be friendly, and that success awaits you.

"But you are panic-stricken; you feel certain that when the time comes you will be seized with stage fright.

"You are sure that you will be terrified by all the eyes that will be concentrated on you when you appear on the platform; you will become uneasy, will sing wrong notes, and will finally break down.

"This is an involuntary autosuggestion, which has taken possession of your mind.

"You can combat it by a voluntary autosuggestion.

"Isolate yourself in a room where no one will come to disturb you. To make assurance doubly sure, lock the door. Settle yourself comfortably in an armchair; or lie down, if you prefer it, on a sofa or on your bed. Close the eyes; and if you are afraid of being disturbed by some noise from outside the room, plug the ears with cotton-wool.

"Relax your body to the utmost, for this physical inertia favours mental passivity, and renders the mind more accessible to suggestion. When your nervous energy is no longer dissipated in making movements or in other work, it will be concentrated in the brain, and you will be better able to devote it to the idea you wish to realize.

"At the outset, endeavour to stop thinking altogether. Try to think of nothing at all for a time. Then direct your thoughts towards the idea which is worrying you, and counteract it by its converse, saying to yourself: 'I don't suffer from stage fright; I sing well; I am perfectly easy in my mind.'

"Take a deep breath. Wait for a moment, and then say once more: 'I don't suffer from stage fright; I sing well; I am perfectly easy in my mind.'

"Repeat the process several times; repeat it five times, ten times, or more, according to the amount of leisure at your disposal.

"Have a number of such 'sittings' every day—in bed, at night, just before you go to sleep; during the night, if you happen to be awake; in the morning before you get up, immediately after waking.

"If you carry out this plan with assurance and conviction, success is certain."[1]

Similarly, Herbert Parkyn gives us autosuggestions for success, autosuggestions for optimism, autosuggestions for the avoidance of the disagreeable consequences of winter, and so on. In themselves, all these prescriptions are excellent. But if our task must thus be approached in detail, if the sittings must be multiplied (even though, through practice, the duration of a single sitting be reduced to two or three minutes), we derive the impression that our lives will be chiefly devoted to the cultivation of autosuggestion. Above all will this be the case if the morbid symptoms, the defects, and the weaknesses we have to overcome, should assail us in great numbers. Perhaps we can keep all our suggestions for the mornings and the evenings? But then we are likely

[1] Op. cit.

to fall asleep before we have finished the series, and we shall never be up in time in the morning. Or shall we parcel out the list, getting through it by sections on successive evenings and mornings? Shall each day have its morning and its evening bill-of-fare, as at a restaurant? So be it. But now, training, the acquirement of habit by daily repetition, will go by the board. Day by day we shall need to make a new effort of thought. This unduly complicated mechanism, in a life which in any case is often far from simple, will be likely to break down before long.

Must we, then, reserve this concentration, this continued repetition of a phrase, for a small number of very special cases, while adopting a different procedure for our habitual suggestions? Such a course would seem to be indicated.

For instance, we should do well to induce the condition of autohypnosis by a physical method, or by the repetition of a phrase *integrally* summarizing the suggestions that have to be made. Having attained the requisite state, we should run the mind over the detailed list of the desired suggestions, fixing each one of them for a brief period in the centre of mental vision. And we should follow the advice of Paul Emile Lévy, who writes:

"Let us represent ourselves to ourselves, let us picture ourselves, as we would like to be—vigorous, robust, overflowing with health. The greater the sharpness of outline in this idea, the more salient it is, the more it assumes the form of an image, the better the prospects of its realization. What is well conceived will be easily realized."

This method was at first recommended by Coué. We should, he considered, formulate a general suggestion, re-

peating it to ourselves a certain number of times ("Day by day, in all respects, I get better and better"). Thence we should pass to details, dwelling mentally for a brief space upon each of the improvements specially desirable for the moment. The general formula remained the same from day to day; the details varied with passing needs.

But in the course of his long experience, Coué came across facts which led him to simplify his methods, and to lay more and more stress upon the concentration previously described.

A female patient came to consult him for troubles of trifling importance, with no thought of using suggestion for the relief of the varicose ulcers from which she likewise suffered. Coué employed in her case, as always, induced suggestion in the waking state (or in a state of slight somnolence), as will be described in Part III. He enumerated the troubles of which the patient had complained, but naturally said nothing concerning the varicose ulcers, since he was not aware of their existence. At the close of the sitting, following his usual practice, Coué impressed upon the subject the importance of practising autosuggestion every morning and every evening. After a few sittings, the patient was cured, not only of the troubles about which she had consulted the doctor, but also of the varicose ulcers, though she had given no thought to these when formulating her suggestions. Yet the ulcers had obstinately resisted various methods of treatment; and during the last few weeks before their sudden cure, no remedial cause was in operation other than the influence of suggestion.

Coué formed a hypothesis which at that time he was inclined to regard as rather improbable. During the

collective sittings the patient might have been impressed by seeing the remarkable cures that were in progress. Some of these were cases of organic disease; others were cases of nervous paralysis, and, since in the latter the cure was at times instantaneous, their effect upon the new patient's imagination was considerable. More or less unconsciously she must have formed in her mind some sort of association between these cases and the ulcers from which she herself suffered, conceiving the latter perhaps as sometimes immobilizing her legs as if she had a nervous paralysis. Under the influence of the suggestion "*In all respects,* I get better and better," her subconscious had considered the ulcers to be one of these "respects," to be a particular case embraced by the general formula.

The hypothesis seemed far-fetched. Nevertheless, Coué's attention had been directed to this line of thought. In the collective sittings, conversation between the patient and the doctor was always very brief, and a special questioning was requisite when details had to be obtained concerning this or that phenomenon. But as soon as Coué had become specially interested in this matter of unforeseen suggestions, he secured a number of reports confirming his hypothesis in the most categorical fashion possible.

Under these conditions it became superfluous for the patient to go into details when formulating suggestions. Strange as it might seem, the general formula sufficed, provided the subject's mind lingered upon the idea conveyed in the words "in all respects." Henceforward the principle of detailed suggestions was abandoned at Nancy. The above-mentioned difficulty had vanished. Every morning and every evening, the subject would

concentrate upon a general formula, as if repeating a litany. No attention to detail was needed. The simplest method proved also the most efficacious—a procedure so simple that at first scepticism naturally prevails as to its efficacy, and its full value can be realized only by those who have actually used it upon themselves.

But we must make this reservation. The great majority of those who practise this form of autosuggestion have at the outset participated in some sitting of induced suggestion where the practitioner has gone into details and has formulated suggestions applying to all the troubles of which the patient has complained. When, as in the case of the varicose ulcers, some undisclosed affection has been cured, we must doubtless admit that, in the atmosphere of the sitting and under its influence, a more or less unconscious association of ideas has been established in the mind of the subject between this particular trouble and the general form of suggestion. If the formula "in all respects" is to be truly efficacious, that formula must, it would seem, have been associated in the opening stage with all the details to which it may relate.

This implies that anyone who practises autosuggestion without having ever been subjected to induced suggestion (where the practitioner formulates details), will find it well to add something to the concentration of the morning and the evening in which he devotes himself to the general formula. In addition he should, during the day, from time to time produce a state of contention by simple collectedness or by autohypnosis, and should then let his mind review the detailed series of desired modifications. Only in obstinate cases will it be necessary to do this every day. But the subject will find the practice

extremely useful whenever he has a few minutes to spare.[1]

With training, the attainment of these states will become increasingly easy. After a time, the subject will find that he need merely close his eyes to secure a sufficient degree of these states.

For, as Bonnet writes: "One who is able to put himself into a more or less profound condition of autohypnotization, will soon cease to be dependent on any physical adjuvant when he wishes to enter this state and to become autosuggestible. After he has practised voluntary training for a few sittings, he will probably be able, in the fully waking state, to master his thought, to guide it, to concentrate it, to isolate himself completely from the outer world."[2]

In this manner we may isolate ourselves more or less perfectly in a tram, in a waiting-room, whenever and wherever we have nothing particular to do and we feel that boredom is imminent. Even without closing the eyes we shall be able to isolate ourselves in the street, in a crowd, during a country walk, etc. Though at first we require to be surrounded with an atmosphere of calm, this becomes less and less essential. In the end we shall find ourselves competent to isolate ourselves to some extent even in a tumultuous assembly, and when the conditions are extremely unfavourable. When a man is prey to an idea, the outer world no longer matters to him. He is in the state in which was Archimedes when he had, while in his bath, discovered his famous "hydro-

[1] As an alternative, when time and opportunity are lacking in the daytime, detailed suggestion may be practised on first waking in the morning, and general suggestion the last thing at night.

[2] Op. cit.

static principle," and in which he appeared in public having totally forgotten to put on his clothes; the state in which was Ampère when, with a piece of chalk in his hand, he would walk behind a cab chalking on the back the details of the problem with which his mind was occupied, without ever noticing that his blackboard was on the march. Such cases of spontaneous contention, and a great many others that are less picturesque, prove to us the possibility of the requisite isolation. We can produce it at will; we must learn how to do this, and how to stop the process when it threatens to become absurd or dangerous.

In a word, without making the practice of inward isolation at odd times a matter of daily obligation, without making it a task superadded to other tasks and increasing the burdens of the day, we can encourage the practice of self-isolation whenever suitable opportunities offer. However rarely we are able to do this, each time will be valuable as far as it goes. On the other hand, when we feel that, as a preliminary, we must train ourselves in exercises of attention, we shall find it well, for a time, to do these exercises regularly.

But *regularly, daily, without a single exception,* we must practise concentration in the morning and the evening. It must bear on the general and extremely simple formula ("Day by day, *in all respects,* I get better and better"). Each sitting will require a few minutes only. Through regular performance, it will become a confirmed habit, and its technique will be steadily perfected. If, even to a minimal extent, we embrace concentration and suggestion themselves within the formula "in all respects," progress will infallibly occur.

If, finally, at any time during the day, we should be seized by some physical pain or should be affected by some undesirable mental state (an obsession, a phobia, a disagreeable reminiscence or a gloomy foreboding, etc.), Coué, guided by experience, advises the following course:

Attain collectedness, in the best possible physical conditions, as by sitting in a comfortable armchair, motionless, with muscles relaxed and eyes closed. Localizing the suggestion, so to speak, to the matter in question, we say (inaudibly if needs must, but at least making the appropriate movements of articulation with tongue and lips) these simple words, "It is passing off," reiterating them rapidly until the trouble, if not cured, is at least sensibly relieved. A certain amount of improvement ought to be obtained in *every* case. Each time we utter the words, we shall do well to pass the hand rapidly over the affected part (the forehead when the trouble is mental). According to the magnetizers, these passes emit a healing "fluid." However this may be, the passes unquestionably aid in the fixation, the materialization, of our thoughts; like the articulatory movements, they help to sustain it, and by their monotony they tend to promote hypnotization. It is in this light that Coué regards them, and whatever may be their mode of action, their value is incontestable. Toothache or headache, however severe, a coughing fit, however violent, will almost invariably and whether passes are made or not, yield to this apparently puerile proceeding. In one experienced in the method, in a person accustomed to practise general suggestion every morning and every evening, relief will ensue within a few minutes.

But here, as always where suggestion is concerned, the finer shades are of the utmost importance. For example, success would be far more dubious were we to employ the formula "It has passed off," or "I have no pain." The trouble, being actually present, bluntly contradicts the assertion each time it is made. On the other hand, the elastic formula "It is passing off" does not arouse an internal protest. Furthermore, the words must be repeated very rapidly. "There is no harm in gabbling," Coué tells us. If between our successive affirmations, "it is passing off," we allow an interval of several seconds to elapse, there is time for us to think ten times over, "it is not passing off." In that case we may be surprised to find that the trouble is getting worse instead of better. As we are pronouncing the words, under our breath if this is necessary, but out loud if there is no hindrance to doing so, we should be carried away by the whirlwind of their speed, so that there is not a free moment for the contrary assertion. The beneficent thought must not allow the maleficent thought to get a word in edgewise.

When the pain or the undesirable mood has persisted despite our best endeavours, we should renew the special suggestion, just before we fall asleep at night, using slumber as an aid to suggestion. When we wake next morning the benefit will be plain.

In like manner, whenever we find a difficulty in going to sleep, we should let the mind be swept away, as it were, by a torrent of words, as we incessantly articulate the phrase "I am going to sleep"—having first assumed our favourite position for slumber, and having forbidden ourselves to change it on any pretext. Above all must we be careful never to allow ourselves to think

"I *want* to go to sleep." The mere fact of invoking the will suffices to prohibit sleep, and this for two reasons. In the first place, the law of reversed effort comes into operation; secondly, the essential characteristic of sleep is relaxation, and consequently sleep cannot be the outcome of an act of will, since will is a state of tension. Moreover, we must not be weary in well doing; we must not be satisfied with a couple of minutes' practice of the method, then breaking off with the naive intention of finding out whether we have gone to sleep. Naturally, we discover that we are not asleep; and, since we have deliberately put ourselves into a suggestible condition, we are now affected with a countersuggestion which nullifies the results of our previous labours.

The finer shades are of the utmost importance. Personal experience will teach us these shades, which must be felt rather than understood and explained. Early failures must be attributed to the fact that we have erred in some of the details, and we must never allow ourselves to be discouraged. After we have felt our way for a time, we shall suddenly discover one day that mastery has come to us. When a beginner complains that results are slow in their advent, Coué is fond of saying, if the patient is a woman, "Madam, if I were to put a Lebel rifle into your hands, you would probably have no idea how to use it. But this would not mean that the rifle was at fault."

The finer shades are of the utmost importance. One of Coué's supreme merits is that he has grasped this fact. A detail which proves his psychological acumen is the distinction he has established between the practice of general suggestion and the practice of special suggestion. In the case of the latter, as we have just pointed

out, he recommends that the formula should be uttered with the utmost possible speed, should be gabbled, in fact. On the other hand, the general formula for morning and evening use should, he tells us, be pronounced "piously," with all the words separately stressed, and with special attention to the phrase "in all respects." At first sight the distinction seems arbitrary. We are inclined to fancy that it is a deliberately introduced complication, intended to strike the imagination by its very illogicality, as do the bizarre prescriptions of charlatans. But this is a total misconception.

Indeed, a little thought will convince us that nothing could be more logical than Coué's advice. Though he fails to give an express reason for the distinction he draws, the reason is not far to seek. The general formula (and, above all, the phrase "in all respects") is closely associated in our mind with the idea of all the desired ameliorations. If, by a brief silence, when a state of concentration prevails, we leave the imagination free to follow up its own clues, it will probably, therefore, get to work on the list of ameliorations. Now this is just what is wanted, for thus we initiate a process which will readily be continued in the subconscious. Especially overnight, just as in the case of the arithmetical problem, do we initiate a suggestion which, during sleep, will ramify, multiply, develop the whole of its implicit content. In the intervals of silence between the repetitions of the formula, the development of the schema is set in operation. We secure the formation of a *spontaneous* procession of images. For reasons with which we are now familiar, this is preferable to a procession of images voluntarily induced; and there will be less risk that the imagination will stray from the ap-

pointed path, as it tends to do in those who are little accustomed to concentration.

When, on the other hand, special suggestion is being practised, there is no such associated train of thought, and errancy will be far more likely. Furthermore, and above all, since special suggestion is most commonly put in practice at times when the subject is actually suffering from some mental or physical trouble, there is considerable risk that the idea of this trouble may slip into any interstices in our repetition of the formula of suggestion, and may thus lead, as we have explained, to the very reverse of what is wanted.

We have dwelt upon this example to show how, in the practice of the New Nancy School, everything is based upon the most precise observation and upon the keenest psychological insight.

The foregoing analyses may have aroused in the reader's mind an impression that autosuggestion is a very complicated affair. The mechanism of autosuggestion is, indeed, complex. But the operation of this machine is simple enough, as the following summary of fundamental rules will show:

1. *Every morning and every evening, betwixt sleep and waking, practise concentration upon the formula of general suggestion.* (*"Day by day, in all respects, I get better and better."*)

2. *When, during the waking hours, you are unexpectedly assailed by some mental or physical trouble, have recourse to the particular suggestion "this is passing off." Should the trouble persist, repeat this in the evening before going to sleep.*

3. *As opportunity offers, attain the state of conten-*

tion, either through simple collectedness or through autohypnosis. Then call up as vividly as possible the image of the desired bodily and mental ameliorations.

4. *Cultivate the faculty of relaxation and the practice of collectedness (art, imagination, the habit of collectedness). Cultivate also the faculty of sustained attention (bodily and mental exercises, regular exercises in learning by heart).*

Here we have all the essentials. By adopting them we may and should attain notable results, though further advice will be given in the sequel. The most important of these four rules is the first, which must never be broken. It is the simplest as well as the most indispensable. Let us add that the student must never forget the law of reversed effort. He must invariably pay heed to Coué's advice: "Above all, be careful never to let the will intervene in the practice of autosuggestion."

It is obvious that the method here prescribed is distinguished by its extreme simplicity from other methods now in vogue.

In view of this simplicity, what estimate shall we form of other methods, for which numerous and complex procedures are requisite? How far are these procedures likely to be of any value?

Let us consider an example which may help us to answer the question. Géraud Bonnet (op. cit.), among a number of prescriptions for autosuggestion, gives the following:

"Get a transparent glass funnel holding from one to two pints.

"When all the preliminary conditions requisite for a good operation have been secured, fill the funnel almost

to the brim with some highly coloured fluid, such as red wine.

"Place the stem of the funnel in an empty bottle, having first plugged the stem with a good thickness of absorbent cotton-wool, in such a fashion that the flow is limited to a fine stream, or the fluid even emerges drop by drop only.

"With a few preliminary trials and by packing the cotton-wool more or less firmly, you will be able to arrange that the funnel will take ten minutes, fifteen minutes, or half an hour to empty itself.

"Place the apparatus on a table and sit down opposite to it, in a comfortable position, one which you will be able to retain for a long time. You may rest your hands on your knees or on the table, or you may rest your elbows on the table and your head on your hands. The bottle with the funnel should be quite near, at a distance ranging from five to fifteen inches.

"Just before you settle down, fill up the funnel, and the fluid will begin to drip into the bottle.

"Keep your gaze fixed on the upper surface of the fluid in the funnel, never permitting your attention to wander from this surface, or from the curve which represents it. Gently but continuously the level falls, and the curve which represents it insensibly diminishes, until at last it reaches the top of the cotton-wool plug and all the fluid has percolated.

"While the descent is in progress, your gaze gradually lowers moment by moment. You will feel a continuous impulse to close your eyes, but you must resist this impulse. Should it become too strong, and interfere with your sight, open the eyes very widely by lifting the upper lids.

"If, nevertheless, the uneasiness proves too much for you, desist and take a rest. Another time you will be able to continue longer; and in the end you will find yourself able to go on gazing energetically until the close of the operation, until all the liquid has percolated.

"Throughout the sitting, you must do your utmost to avoid noticing the noise which is made by the drip of the fluid into the bottle. This tends to distract your attention, and makes the exercise difficult. If it becomes too importunate, plug the ears with cotton-wool."

After detailing a number of similar exercises, Bonnet concludes as follows:

"The foregoing exercises, in which we have recourse to the sense of hearing and the sense of sight, may unexpectedly eventuate in the involuntary production of the hypnotic state.

"In fact, Braid's fundamental method for inducing hypnotization consisted in fixing the attention by the concentration of thought.

"Now in all the exercises I have been describing, and in all the analogous exercises we can imagine employing for the same purpose, these conditions are realized, or at least the subject attempts to realize them.

"It would seem, therefore, that the operation ought to terminate, or may possibly terminate, in hynotization. . . . There is no harm in that, and the prospect need not greatly disturb us. Indeed, we may rather be pleased, for we can turn it to useful account."

Let us at once point out that the author displays a certain confusion when he is speaking of these exercises. What does he propose to educate? Is it the effort of sustained attention? Or is it, on the other hand, auto-hypnosis? Bonnet's objective is obviously the effort

of attention. Nevertheless, if the experiment should culminate in autohypnosis (and consequently in relaxation), this matters very little and may even be advantageous. Such confusions throw the pupil off the track. They are the same as those made by the Americans in the use of the word concentration. The error, identical in all cases, lies in considering training in suggestion as training of the will. Hence the contradictions that ensue.

In practice it would be better to know precisely what is the aim of the particular exercise we are to undertake. That is why, in our opinion, the exercises must be simplified; that is why the exercises which keep the attention awake, must be sharply distinguished from those which immobilize it in order to induce hypnosis. Among the former must be classed the exercises in memorization recommended by Herbert Parkyn, and it is these which we advise for the development of sustained voluntary attention. But for the development of autohypnosis, we can use any sort of exercise in fixation. In that case, however, the more the will is in abeyance, the more rapidly is hypnosis likely to ensue.

As a general rule, therefore, let us choose simple exercise. Nevertheless, we do not underrate the occasional value of those of a somewhat complicated character, those for which comparatively elaborate preparations are needed. These seize the imagination, and often impress us in spite of ourselves, just as do old wives' prescriptions. *People are inclined to disbelieve in the efficacy of anything simple;* every doctor is well aware of this truth, and every doctor takes it into account in his advice to his patients. All the same, the retaining of complicated methods cannot be recommended except for simple-

minded persons, who would find it very difficult to understand the true mechanism of autosuggestion. The practice of elaborate exercises substitutes spontaneous suggestion for reflective suggestion, for the patient imagines that the prescription does the work, whereas the real agent is the imagination itself. It is much better to imbue our mind with the simple law which regulates autosuggestion, and to put this law into practice with equal simplicity. But routinism is so prevalent and prejudice is often so powerful that many persons find it difficult to accept the law in all its simplicity.

There is one group of exercises which requires special mention, for they have been recommended in all ages as aids to the "development of mental force." We find them already in the yoga of Hindustan, and we encounter them once more in the teaching of the ultra-modern American schools of autosuggestion. I refer to breathing exercises. Is their historical relationship to autosuggestion a mere chance, a mere matter of tradition, or has it a logical basis?

As most people know, the method consists in the daily practice of deep breathing, which may or may not be accompanied by movements of the limbs. Through training, the subject becomes capable of holding his breath for a longer time, and can maintain an interval between inspirations and expirations. It is recommended that suggestion should be practised simultaneously with the breathing exercise. We may quote Bonnet in this connection:

"Let us suppose that we wish to rid our mind of a feeling of gloom. The opposite of gloom is cheerfulness. The suggestion should bear upon the idea, 'I am cheerful.'

"The phrase is simple. Suppose we desire to use respiratory movements of average depth. The movements of inspiration and expiration have approximately the same duration and are separated by very brief intervals. During inspiration the subject thinks 'I am,' and during expiration 'cheerful.'

"Since this operation entails very little fatigue, it may be repeated as often as you like, twenty times, fifty times, a hundred times, until thought ceases, or turns to something else, or until an almost unconscious mechanism comes into play.

"Deep breathing may likewise be practised with the same associations. But here, since each phase of the complete respiration is greatly prolonged, the entire autosuggestion 'I am cheerful' may be made during inspiration and repeated during expiration. A variant would be to do nothing in the way of suggestion during the respiratory movements, and to reserve the thought 'I am cheerful' for the apparent rest which terminates and follows expiration. In this case the subject must be careful to keep his mind a blank during expiration and inspiration."

There can be no question as to the physiological value of breathing exercises. Whatever promotes bodily well-being must obviously provide a solid foundation for mental vigour, and it will consequently favour autosuggestion. But why, among the numerous methods for developing the physique, should breathing exercises have become specially associated with suggestion?

The reasons, I think, are easy to discover. In the first place the sensation of wellbeing which always follows the drawing of a deep breath, unquestionably favours the working of any ameliorative suggestion. The images

of vigour and health which we desire to evoke find a mainstay in this feeling. Furthermore, by its regular rhythm (of which the exercises make us aware), breathing exerts a stimulus analogous to that exerted by every rhythm that has a lulling influence, a stimulus which immobolizes the attention and tends to induce hypnosis. Finally, the relations between the faculty of attention and the function of breathing are well known. These considerations suffice to explain the suggestive value of respiratory exercises.

Herbert Parkyn goes further, and believes that there is a large element of suggestion in the physiological value of the much-belauded breathing exercises. If this be so, the fact does not render the value any less real. In order to obtain still better results, he recommends that respiratory exercises should be reinforced by the simultaneous practice of reflective suggestion:

"Remember to employ autosuggestion while you exercise, for you would not be taking the exercises unless you expected to accomplish something through them, and the mind is such an important factor in bringing about the results you desire, that you should direct your thoughts systematically and intelligently.

"For instance, if you are breathing to improve your general health, use autosuggestions like the following:

"The air is one of the life essentials. I am now breathing deeply and it feels so good to get this fresh air into my lungs. I know I shall feel better for it. . . . Every deep breath stimulates the heart's action and in this way assures better nutrition to every cell in the body."[1]

My chief reason for analyzing these various exercises

[1] Op. cit., 126-7.

has been the wish to show the reader how he can himself analyze the numerous exercises, respiratory and other, recommended in current manuals of autosuggestion. What these manuals chiefly lack, in most instances, is grasp of principle and knowledge of method. In the advice they give, we always find more dross than gold; there is invariably a quantity of rubbish to throw away. When any particular exercise is recommended, we must ask what useful purposes it can serve (in promoting attention, collectedness, autohypnosis, contention, or concentration). Relying on the general principles formulated above, we can approximately judge whether and to what extent the exercise is well adapted to attain its end.

Above all, avoid falling into a superstition about exercises; and avoid an undue multiplicity of exercises. We know that the practice of autosuggestion is simple and easy; that it need not occasion any loss of time; that everyone can and everyone should acquire the art. The morning and evening concentration is the basis of the whole thing. Exercises are no more than adjuvants, doubtless of great value. But we must be careful not to overestimate their importance.

CHAPTER SEVEN

EXAMPLES AND SPECIAL RULES

We are now acquainted with the chief rules which must be observed during the deliberate practice of autosuggestion. In addition to morning and evening concentration, we have referred to specialized suggestions which have to be formulated from time to time as need arises, and to detailed suggestions which have to be run through the mind in series as opportunity offers during the course of the day.

The practice of general suggestion is simple enough. As regards particular suggestions, on the other hand, as regards those suggestions of which general suggestion is a condensation, it will be well to enter into some detail and to deal with concrete instances.

First of all, what results are we entitled to aim at?

It may be affirmed that *reflective suggestion is of value in all domains where we have seen spontaneous suggestion at work.* In particular, since the task will often be to uproot harmful spontaneous suggestions, it is well to be aware, as a matter of principle, that *whatever suggestion has done, suggestion can undo.* This is of great value from many points of view. We have seen that in his first awkward attempts, the subject sometimes suggests to himself the very opposite of what he desires. This happens either from excess of effort, which sets the

law of reversed effort in operation; or else because, between the beneficent affirmations, silences intervene during which the converse affirmation is more or less wittingly repeated. Some readers may take fright at this warning, and may at once renounce the idea of handling so dangerous a weapon, which may explode in your face at the breech. But if whatever suggestion has done, suggestion can undo, the difficulty will be surmounted, the danger will vanish, and after a little practice the subject will be able to handle his weapon with perfect safety.

Let us add that the converse of the above principle does not hold good. It would be false to say that suggestion has been the cause of whatever suggestion can undo. We encounter various troubles, some functional and some organic, in which cures are daily effected by autosuggestion although they were in no way caused by an antecedent suggestion.

Whether the cause of the malady be or be not suggestive, the first task of reflective suggestion will obviously be to counteract the evil, regardless of its origin. But in this negative rôle of suggestion we must do our utmost to avoid using negative formulas. We must not say "this or that will not recur"; for in doing so we call up once more the idea of the trouble which is to be dispelled, and tend to impress it on the mind side by side with the idea of cure. Thus, as in the case of effort, there will arise two conflicting suggestions, which may neutralize one another more or less. We should employ by preference a positive and genuinely creative formula. The neurasthenic might say: "No longer shall I be, less and less shall I be, the victim of the gloomy thoughts, of the phobias from which I have hitherto suffered."

But he will do much better to say: "From to-day onwards, and increasingly day by day, thoughts will flow into my mind which will be unlike the old thoughts; they will not necessarily be light thoughts, unduly lively, which would do outrage to my sufferings; they will be ideas of a serious complexion, but ideas full of certitude, confidence, and hope." The tubercular patient might say: "My system is resisting the disease, the microbes are becoming less numerous every day, and are being eliminated; I am not so short of breath, sleeplessness is less persistent, the cough is not so troublesome, there is less blood in my sputum, the night sweats are less frequent and less copious;" and so on. But he will be wiser to say: "Day by day I gain strength and feel stronger; I breathe more easily, more deeply, and with greater freedom; I have better appetite, a large appetite, an irresistible appetite, and I assimilate my food perfectly; I sleep better and better, more soundly, falling asleep directly I put my head on the pillow; my slumbers are unbroken, so that even a thunderstorm cannot wake me;[1] thanks to this improved assimilation, to this sleep, to this spontaneously deep breathing, my health is being reëstablished; my blood grows richer; my white corpuscles become more numerous and are increasingly active. Each day I am capable of a little more muscular exertion, but I never overdo it; after taking exercise I find that my skin remains dry like that of a person in good health. Now I turn to the deeper cause of the trouble; this cause being attacked, the effect will disappear, and *all the symptoms, whatever their kind,* will be relieved, whether I am aware of their existence or not."

To sum up: whenever the mention of details would

[1] All these results have been obtained in tubercular patients.

involve the use of a negative formula, it will be better to rest content with a general formula. To this, therefore, we are often limited in dealing with symptoms.

In other words, if in actual fact reflective suggestion must often be negative, its mode of expression must remain as positive as possible, and the logical distinction between positive and negative suggestions may be ignored in practice. This distinction cannot provide us with a principle of classification. In the examples now to be given we shall avail ourselves of the classification we have already used in the case of spontaneous suggestions, speaking of them as representative suggestions, affective suggestions, and active or motor suggestions.

In the representative domain, every one of us should, from the first, secure appreciable results in the development of the *memory.*[1] We should never say to ourselves: "I have no memory; I am losing my memory; I have reached the age when memory begins to fail." We should affirm that our memory in general is excellent, that the special memory we are in search of is just coming back, that we shall always remember what we wish to remember without any trouble. We shall not allow a failure of memory, or two or three failures in brief succession, to disconcert us, and we shall never permit ourselves to regard them as signs that our memory is decaying. The trend of contemporary psychology is to

[1] In all the examples which follow, the reader will do well to collate them with the descriptions of the corresponding spontaneous suggestions given in Part I, Chapters III to VIII. For the successful practice of reflective suggestion, we must call up the memory of the mental state that prevails during the initiation of the corresponding spontaneous suggestion, and must realize an analogous condition.

confirm the theory that all our memories are stored up in the subconscious, even those memories which seem to have been utterly lost. In profoundly hypnotized subjects, we are able to observe the revival, the "ecphory" (as the biologist Semon, followed by Auguste Forel, terms it), of buried memories. But that which heterosuggestion can achieve in induced sleep, autosuggestion can likewise achieve to a considerable extent.

All the *intellectual faculties* can be developed by suggestion. Let us be careful to avoid being led astray by fallacious physiological considerations. William James pointed out that the most trivial thought must affect brain structure, inasmuch as it left an imprint on the brain. *Attention,* above all, can be greatly developed and facilitated by suggestion. It is one of the conditions of suggestion, but becomes in its turn an effect of suggestion; thus an alternating cycle is set up, rendering rapid progress possible. If, at the outset, we have an unduly strong tendency towards mind-wandering, regular practice will enable us, by degrees, but easily, to correct this fault.

Nay more. In cases where, in former days, it was considered necessary to make a great effort to fix the attention, as in learning by heart and in other mental work, we now realize that better results can often be obtained by suggestion than by effort. We have seen how the subconscious can solve a problem during sleep. Let us profit by this observation. Practical experience will convince us that, by concentrating the mind on a question, we shall to a great extent spare ourselves the effort which would otherwise have been requisite. We shall initiate subconscious activities, and the work will then go on spontaneously within us. In what cases and to

what an extent will this substitution be possible? That is a matter for the future to decide.

Artists are aware, by implication at least, that their inspirations come from the subconscious, and to evoke them they encourage conditions of outcropping. But they are apt to leave to hap and hazard the choice of the means by which these states are to be induced. Often they ascribe to the means, an importance which in reality belongs only to the resultant state—a state which might have been brought about by very different means. Hence the fetichism often displayed by artists for tobacco, alcohol, narcotics and intoxicants of all kinds, debauchery. But the desirable thing is not the alcohol, the tobacco, or the debauchery in itself; the real object of their quest is the outcropping of the subconscious which attends the intoxication. Some artists discover this, instinctively or by chance, and are thus enabled to find inspiration without the use of methods that entail physical ruin. These are the greatest of their tribe. The utilization of natural sleep, after a period of mental concentration, is peculiarly fruitful. Victor Hugo was well aware of this, and his mode of life in Guernsey has become famous. He never wrote a line in the afternoon. At this time of day he went for a drive, immersed in profound meditation. Hypnotized, as it were, by haunting thoughts, the poet would let his mind range amid his unfinished visions. Visibly cut off from his surroundings, he would hardly exchange a word with anyone. The work thus initiated went on during sleep. At five in the morning he was seated at his writing-table, ready to record upon paper the poem which was now ready in his mind.

A poet whose days were fully occupied in earning a

livelihood by prosaic means (he was a commission agent) gave me the following account of his methods of work. "The idea of a poem comes into my head: I am careful to make no attempt to write it for the moment. But after six in the evening, when I am back in my own room, I isolate myself, I plunge myself into a kind of hypnosis, I am emotionally stirred, and the condensation of the poetic images begins. I wait another twenty-four hours. On the morrow, when I have a moment to myself, I think of my poem—in the street, as I go about my business. At six o'clock, when I am once more alone in my room, my poem is ready for me, and I write it."

As far as *opinions* are concerned, the rôle of reflective suggestion must be mainly negative. It will be a self-control, a door-keeper to the mind, warding off the intrusion of ready-made opinions. It will aim at keeping reflection and judgment on the alert. It will try to save us from moral contagion, above all during epidemic seasons, during times when strong collective emotion or collective passion favours collective suggestion—as happens during revolution and in war-time, when opinions are so much influenced by suggestion that entire nations, viewed from a detached standpoint, have the aspect of gigantic lunatic asylums, so that experts have with good reason described a "belligerents' psychosis."[1] The worst feature of suggestions of this sort is that, like all suggestions, they have a teleology of their own, so that the suggested opinion generates in the subject's mind excellent reasons for its own justification. Among intellectuals, these reasons are built up into a system, which

[1] See Jacques Mesnil, Note d'un psychiatre (demain, Geneva, 1916); Auguste Forel, La psychanalyse et la guerre (Le Carmel, Geneva, 1917).

has a connected and logical semblance. Like the sufferers from major hysteria, persons holding such opinions lie in perfect good faith. A typical example is furnished by the celebrated manifesto of the ninety-three German intellectuals, issued in 1914. This and similar instances serve to show the extent to which we are all exposed to such epidemics, and how essential it is that a preventive countersuggestion should stand sentry over our judgment. In 1796, a period of intense political ferment, Goethe wrote: "Merely in order to live, I try to escape altogether from the spirit of my time."

The suggestion of representative states wherein is implicit the belief in some particular objective reality (opinions, judgments, sensations), cannot fail, from the point of view of truth, to be positively harmful. As already pointed out, if I convince myself by autosuggestion that the earth is square, it is true that I believe it, but it is not true that the earth is square. Consequently, in this domain, the rôle of suggestion must chiefly be one of countersuggestion, of prevention, of sentry duty. Unless, indeed, we are prepared to admit that certain opinions, though lacking adequate objective foundation, are none the less useful, are necessary to life, and must therefore be autosuggested. *Fiat vita, pereat veritas!* The theory has its interest, but this is not the place for its discussion. Speaking generally, it would seem that truth is a good thing, and that hallucinations and false opinions are undesirable.[1]

In the affective sphere, the rôle of suggestion must

[1] Cf. Paul Emile Lévy: "I suggest to myself that I shall have erroneous ideas. The next day I have them, and my mind is exclusively filled with them, so that I have to discontinue my work."

likewise in many cases be negative. Thus, in all varieties of physical pain, we have to employ it as an *anæsthetic*. We may lay down as a principle that it should always be possible in this manner to obtain a result, total or partial. Certain very keen or obstinate pains, such as toothache[1] and headache, are among those in which complete success may be attained in a very brief time. Having achieved relief from pain, we can then continue the use of suggestion as a preventive, so that the trouble shall not recur either on the morrow or subsequently.

Hunger is easy to control. If we are compelled to fast, we can neutralize the inconveniences of abstinence. Not only can we annul the pangs of hunger, but in addition we can minimize the accompanying symptoms of exhaustion. Should appetite be capricious, we can regulate it by the use of conditional suggestion, affirming that we shall feel hungry whenever we sit down to a meal, regardless of any stress of emotion, such as formerly would cause loss of appetite. When mealtimes come, our hunger will be irresistible, but we shall never be hungry between meals.

If we bear *cold* or *heat* badly, we can suggest to ourselves that we shall bear it better in future, and we can stress these suggestions as winter or summer draws near. We must forbid ourselves to be "afraid" of heat or cold, for to be afraid is per se a noxious suggestion.

With regard to heat and cold, we shall adopt an offensive and independent attitude; we shall no longer consider it necessary to safeguard ourselves against them by cumbersome paraphernalia. We shall be able to wear the same clothing, or nearly the same, all the year

[1] Complete anæsthesia can be secured although the caries persists.

round, and to dress lightly on the whole. This result will be secured by degrees, and will confirm us in the belief that we are far more independent of external conditions than we had fancied. The thought is in itself an excellent suggestion.

We shall master *fatigue.* In the course of hard work we shall postpone from hour to hour the onset of weariness. But we must do this *without effort,* for otherwise we should be heaping up trouble for ourselves, and in the end we should not be simply fatigued but utterly worn out. When walking we can turn to account the regular rhythm of our footsteps as a lulling influence, inducing a slight degree of hypnosis, which will facilitate the suggestion of non-fatigue. A workman engaged at a noisy machine can even use the rhythm of this machine for the same purpose, if the circumstances be such as to permit a moment's immobilization of attention.

We shall easily be able to avoid undesirable *emotions,* such as anger and fear, and also the diminutives of fear known as *phobias,* including bashfulness and stage fright. Even when we have suffered from such emotions almost ever since we can remember, we shall speedily learn how to control them. As previously indicated, the sufferer should direct his attention more especially to the movements that accompany these emotions. If we have been bashful, we shall suggest to ourselves that henceforward we shall be able to look people in the face, to speak without faltering. If we fear the dark, if we are afraid of certain animals, we shall forbid ourselves to shiver from fright at the encounter, or to make any of the other gestures of fear. If, for instance, toads are the enemy, we shall go cautiously. We shall begin by saying that next time we see a toad we shall not turn

away our eyes. On the contrary, we shall look the bugbear fearlessly in the face. When this has been successfully achieved, we shall order ourselves on the next occasion to make several steps towards the toad; to lean over it; to examine it closely. Some persons suffer from phobia of one of the domesticated animals, dogs, cats, or horses. They must set before themselves as the final goal of suggestion (a goal they must only attempt to reach by easy stages) the acquirement of a fondness for the animals which hitherto they could not endure, a pleasure in caressing these animals. When they have gone thus far—and they must persevere till then—they may feel assured that they have made a great step in self-control and a great advance in the practice of auto-suggestion.

But if there are undesirable emotions, there are also desirable emotions. We know that emotion can favour suggestion in one direction just as well as in another. While it may be difficult to arouse emotions by reflective suggestion, since an emotion must be of spontaneous origin, we can at any rate increase our emotional susceptibility, can increase it as much as we think advisable, leaving life to mould out of this plastic material the particular emotions which we have not specified in our formula of suggestion. We may, however, usefully affirm that whatever emotions we feel shall be desirable emotions.

Suggestion can play its part in regulating the whole of our affective life. To a considerable extent, we can arouse in our mind certain *sentiments,* and we can suppress other sentiments. All ethical systems, all religions, prescribe such a regulation of the affective life; but in so far as, in the attempt to carry out the prescription,

we lean on voluntary effort, we are soon convinced of our impotence, and we draw the conclusion: "This cannot be done to order."—It can, however, be done to order, but through the instrumentality of a mental attitude which is based upon suggestion and not upon the will. It is by calling up the good sentiment that we pave the way for its realization; and thereby, at the same time, we invite the bad sentiment to yield up its place. If, when we wish to expel an undesirable sentiment, we confine ourselves to the use of a negative formula, the chances are that we shall fail. *Veni Creator* is, in all respects, a far more potent exorcism than *Vade retro Satanas*. We get rid of evil by filling its place with good.

We summon joy to us; we create joy for ourselves. Goethe knew this, for he wrote: "We must laugh before we become happy; and if joy be not complaisant, we must compel her to yield." In these words, Goethe likewise reveals his realization that the expression of a sentiment calls up this sentiment. It is the counterpart of what he wrote on the same topic in *Werther*.[1]

Is there any need to dwell upon the advantage that may be derived from reflective suggestion in the mastery of our tastes, our inclinations, and our passions? "It

[1] Die Leiden des jungen Werthers, Part I, Chapter V.—Cf. Marden, op. cit., p. 141: "I know of a woman who was prone to fits of depression, of the 'blues,' who conquered them by forcing herself to sing bright, joyous songs, and to play lively, inspiring airs on the piano whenever she felt an 'attack' coming on."—Ibid., pp. 144-5: "A physician, who is a 'nerve' specialist, advises his patients to try to smile under all circumstances. . . . 'Keep on smiling, . . . just try turning up the corners of your mouth. See how it makes you feel, regardless of your mood.'"

is useless to dispute about tastes or about colours'' is a common saying. People seem to imagine that tastes, whether in food or in other things, are inalterable. But we, who have learned the part played in their formation by spontaneous suggestion, know that they are nothing of the kind. There is, in fact, no better discipline in reflective suggestion than to acquire control over all our tastes; to overcome our repulsions until we have taught ourselves to be fond of things which we could not bear to look at even in a picture; to get the better of our little weaknesses for this or that coveted dish. We ought to find no difficulty in liking everything that is edible; our stomachs would be all the better for it. If we are compelled to adopt a strict regimen (which will rarely be necessary when we know how to turn the forces of suggestion to good account), we shall learn to like what is good for us, and to have no longings for anything that will disagree with us. If we have to take a medicine with an unpleasant taste, we shall suggest to ourselves that the taste is agreeable. (In many cases, this victory over ourselves will prove much more profitable to us than the actual taking of the medicine.) In such instances, we can apply the method of special suggestion shortly before the food has to be eaten or the medicine to be swallowed. When the repulsion proves difficult to overcome, we may employ suggestion simultaneously with the taking of the dose which we find so offensive. We must close our eyes so as not to see it, and to help us to attain collectedness. If what we have to swallow is a draught, we shall drink it down to the accompaniment of reiterated mental affirmations that it is really quite indifferent to us. At a later stage we can teach ourselves to like it. We must not try to get on too quickly.

Passions which have struck deep root in our being are far more difficult to extirpate. I do not mean that suggestion is incompetent to conquer the greater passions. But what must be foreseen is that, after the first success, the subject will be apt to regret that his life has been narrowed. His passion has bulked so largely in his existence that, when its voice has been silenced, he finds himself in a disconcerting and distressing void. He is loath to take another step forward; and even if he should persist in formulating his suggestion, he does so with the secret wish that the suggestion may fail. A safer way is to have a better passion to substitute for the one that has proved dangerous. Still more advantageous is it to sublimate the dangerous passion, to cultivate it while transforming it. Such is the course chosen by the impassioned devotees of art, religion, and duty.

Suggestion is able to overcome the keenest mental pain. But here, too, the sufferer who has been relieved is sometimes inclined to regret the loss of his suffering. He has a sense of vacancy. Previously, his suffering was intense; he longed to be freed from it; he was single-hearted in that longing, and he cast no glance backwards. But now, after deliverance, he regrets the chains that galled him so bitterly, for their very torture made him feel alive, saved him from an emptiness which seems like non-existence. Perhaps the subject has been mourning a lost one. When his grief has been assuaged by suggestion, he feels that the dead is being robbed of the due meed of sorrow. Such a case was seen at the Nancy clinic. Of course, this remorse may be another trick of the subconscious; a new torture substituted for the old, in order to fill the void, which is the worst torture of all.

To sum up, suggestion can assuage mental pain. But is such assuagement always desirable? Here we enter upon a very different question, and it is one which lies beyond the scope of the present work.

To the active and motor sphere belong the suggestions that will be most frequently employed.

We have pointed out the part played by suggestion in the formation of habits. One of the leading rôles of reflective suggestion is the acquirement of good habits and the overcoming of bad habits. For the latter purpose, we must once more, as far as possible, use suggestion in its positive form, by suggesting a new habit to be substituted for the habit we desire to suppress. Let us quote Coué:

"To give you a clear understanding of the way in which suggestion acts in the treatment of moral defects, I will make a comparison. Let us suppose the brain to be a board into which have been driven brads representing the ideas, the habits, the instincts, which determine our actions. If we perceive that in any individual there exists a bad idea, a bad habit, a bad instinct—in a word, a bad brad, let us take another brad representing the good idea, the good habit, the good instinct; let us place its point directly over the head of the bad brad, and strike on it a single blow with a hammer; in other words, let us make a suggestion. The new brad will be driven a little way in, a millimetre perhaps, and the old one will be driven out for a corresponding distance. At each fresh blow of the hammer, at each fresh suggestion that is to say, the new brad will enter for an additional millimetre, and the bad one will emerge to the same extent. After a certain number of blows, the old brad will have

been completely dislodged, and the new one will have taken its place."[1]

If we attack the bad habit with a negative formula, suggestion must aim at keeping the attention on the alert in case the habit should have become unconscious. For example, one who bites his nails can teach himself by suggestion to become aware of what he is doing directly he raises the fingers to the mouth. Then he can stop himself. To be sure of a successful result, he must also suggest to himself that the bad habit shall become distasteful.

When we treat a bad habit by induced suggestion, we commonly suggest to the subject that he will be totally unable to yield to his inclination. A young man of eighteen, who had been a nail-biter since early childhood, begged me to cure him by suggestion. I suggested to him that throughout the day he would be positively unable to raise his hand to his mouth. In the evening, he wished to pick one of his teeth with his finger. He was unable to do so, and had to use the point of a pencil. From this day forwards he practised autosuggestion; the habit was cured.

Impotence is not a desirable ideal to set before ourselves; nevertheless, in the cases under consideration our suggestions must take this form. We must not say: "I shall be able to resist temptation in future." We must say: "I shall no longer be tempted. Should I wish to regain a taste for my habit, I shall find that I am unable to do so." This form of suggestion economizes effort.

Certain habits are not fully under the control of the voluntary muscles; but the involuntary muscular movements on which they depend are perfectly amenable to

[1] Coué, op. cit., pp. 20, 21.

suggestion. This is the case with tics or habit-spasms, for instance, and with cough. In such cases we need not hesitate to suggest impotence, saying: "My tic will become less frequent; and soon, even should I wish to simulate it, I shall be unable to do so." In the case of cough, we should not say: "Henceforward I shall be able to *check* my cough." We should say: "The cough will spontaneously subside, and in a little while I shall be unable to cough however much I may try to do so; if there should be mucus in the passages which requires to be expectorated, I shall be able to expectorate it without provoking a paroxysm of cough." Such complete mastery over coughing is in most cases easy to secure, even in the advanced stages of consumption. Specialists have long since noted that certain consumptives do not cough. Since, for tubercular patients, cough is always a noxious habit, some doctors forbid their patients to cough. This is quite a mistaken prescription, unless the patient is provided with the means which will enable him to cure his cough, unless he is taught how to practise autosuggestion. Voluntary effort not to cough is an absurdity. There is a German sanatorium in which a Prussian discipline prevails. Here the rules permit the patients to cough once or twice a day; but the consumptives are punished if they cough more frequently. They make convulsive efforts to stifle the paroxysms, and these efforts are quite as exhausting as the cough. But the desired result could easily have been secured by autosuggestion.

When the habitual action is more or less pleasurable, we must not be over-sanguine as to an immediate definitive cure, above all if the habit is of long standing. Benoist-Hanappier puts the case very well when he ex-

plains that if we expect too much in these cases, we are risking a failure; and that every failure is a suggestion of impotence for the future. He writes:

"Do you crave for a cigarette? Say to yourself, 'I shall not light one for half an hour.' And keep your word. Do not attempt to go too quickly. Do not begin by saying, 'I shall wait two hours.' You would be very likely to give way to temptation before the two hours were up. This failure would discourage you, would lead you to distrust yourself, would make you lose ground. Do not imitate those who, training themselves for a long walk, suddenly double their daily distance, and overtire themselves. This is to defeat the object of training, whose method it is to enable us *without fatigue* to take longer and longer walks."[1]

We have seen how suggestion can command the events which make up our destiny, can command them through the instrumentality of the sayings and doings inspired by the subconscious. We have learned in what sense it is true that our star is within us.

O. S. Marden writes (op. cit., p. 158): "Your whole thought current must be set in the direction of your life purpose. . . . Our mental attitude, our heart's desire, is our perpetual prayer which nature answers. . . . He alone is inferior who admits inferiority, who voluntarily accepts a position of inferiority, because he thinks himself unlucky. The world belongs to him who conquers it. Good things belong to those who make them their own by the strength of their desire, by the firmness of their will."

Our only criticism of the American evangelist's pre-

[1] Benoist-Hanappier, professor at the university of Nancy, En marge de Nietzsche, Figuière, Paris, 1912.

cepts is that his use of the words "desire" and "will" betrays inadequate analysis. We may desire and will, but we shall do so vainly if we imagine or fear ourselves to be unable. Our imagination and our thought must tend in the same direction as our desire and our will. Now this depends on ourselves, on the suggestions we make to ourselves.

But it is above all in the treatment of disease that insufficient appeal has hitherto been made to the power of suggestion. For a considerable period it has been usual to employ heterosuggestion to regularize the bodily functions, to relieve constipation, to promote sleep, to cure amenorrhœa, to help digestion, to prevent nervous palpitation. This is often supposed to be the last word in psychotherapeutics. In some instances, good results have even been secured in organic disease. The general belief is, however, that, as far as organic disease is concerned success is quite exceptional. It is thought that there are, after all, not many cases for which treatment by suggestion is advisable.

This would be true if we had no resource but heterosuggestion. But autosuggestion, as we have seen, produces modifications as profound and lasting as those that have hitherto been produced by heterosuggestion. By the methodical use of autosuggestion we may hope to attain results greatly surpassing the "marvels of hypnotism." This is no mere hypothesis. Or, if it be a hypothesis, it is one which is daily being verified. The observed cures have been obtained by the regular practice of autosuggestion. It is true that the starting-point has been a heterosuggestion made by the practitioner. That is why we reserve the description of these cases for Part III, which treats of Induced Suggestion. There

we shall describe the methods employed in the Nancy clinic. But successful results are only secured *when the subject regularly practises autosuggestion.* Induced suggestion, as we shall explain, has served merely to train the patient in autosuggestion. It is to the influence of the latter that success must be ascribed.

Moreover, there are persons who, having attended a single lecture or a course of lectures, having read a well-written pamphlet, or having witnessed a sitting, have grasped the principle, have put it into practice, and thereupon (without being subjected to preliminary heterosuggestion) have secured results parallel to those we shall describe.

Everyone can verify the efficacy of the method for himself by applying it in minor troubles, thus ascertaining if he has grasped the correct procedure. You wish to stop a hæmorrhage, nose-bleeding for instance? If this nose-bleeding ordinarily lasts a quarter of an hour, with intermissions, you should readily be able to secure the formation of a good clot and the arrest of the hæmorrhage within two or three minutes. Attain collectedness, and make use of some form of special suggestion. You can place a watch in front of you and keep your eyes on the second-hand, having fixed a time in your mind when the bleeding is to stop. You *ought* to be successful; and if you fail, it will be because your method is still faulty, because you have overlooked some detail. In like manner, if you are subject to colds in the head which usually last a week suggest to yourself that the trouble will pass over in four days. At a later stage you can forbid the catarrh to develop at all. You can dictate to an abscess the moment when it is to burst. *Without any other treatment than* autosuggestion, you can cure

pimples, warts, varicose ulcers, eczema. The first results will encourage you, and will induce you to apply suggestion in more and more serious troubles, never allowing yourself to be discouraged by a failure. You will say to yourself that *no one knows the limit to the power of suggestion; that suggestion has cured cases supposed to be incurable;* that it must be tried in positively all cases.

The regulation of *sleep* is a most valuable exercise, for sleep is exceptionally responsive to suggestion. Since it is a relaxation, it can only be hindered, not favoured, by any *effort* to promote it. Sleep is very ready to obey suggestion. If we fail to summon sleep at will, there must be something wrong with our method. Perhaps we are making an effort at the time we formulate our suggestion. As soon as we are successful, we may be sure that we have done away with effort, and that our method is now correct.

Henceforward we shall be able to go to sleep almost instantaneously. We shall accurately prescribe the hour of waking. We shall prohibit nightmare. We shall even be able to direct the course of our dreams. We shall forbid ourselves to be awakened by any noise, however violent, unless a real danger threatens. On the other hand, we can suggest to ourselves that we shall awaken in response to stimuli which ordinarily are insufficient to rouse us; that we shall be wakened by the slightest cry of a child or by the least sound from a sick person (one who need not actually be watched, or rather one whom we can watch even when we are asleep); that we shall be awakened by a dream, by some thought that comes during sleep, in response to a question formulated overnight. In a word, nothing is more sensitive to suggestion than sleep. It is precisely for this reason that

we have to walk warily. If our method be faulty, we shall readily initiate a countersuggestion, and the result will be the very reverse of what we desire. If we suggest to ourselves that we shall sleep soundly and shall awaken at a definite time, with the half-acknowledged thought that this waking will require a continued effort of attention, our sleep is likely to be troubled, and we may repeatedly awaken before the time. But if we can suppress the half-acknowledged thought, we shall sleep soundly and shall awaken at the appointed hour, without any fatigue. It is obvious that the regulation of sleep is preëminently a matter in which attention to minor shades of detail is of the first importance. That is why it is such excellent practice to acquire the mastery of sleep. When we have done so, we can expect great things from ourselves in the way of suggestion.

For the attainment of the results above described, and of others yet more striking, it is not necessary to have been subjected to induced suggestion. An intelligent person, one able to throw off the routinist scepticism of his everyday environment, can do all that is requisite alone and unaided.

A man named Jacquemin, a chemist at Malzéville near Nancy, had suffered for a long time from chronic rheumatism. Coué, who did not know him personally, though he had treated Jacquemin's daughter, received from him one day the following letter: "I have had a wonderful success in the use of your method on myself. I suffered from rheumatic pains in the legs, so that it was difficult for me to get about. I treated myself by saying several times a day, and at night just before going to sleep: 'There is nothing the matter with me; I can walk quite well; etc.' I at once began to improve, and in a few

days I had completely recovered. I should tell you that I was theoretically convinced of the value of autosuggestion, so that this good result did not come to me as a surprise.'' The case is by no means exceptional. I have chosen it because the rapidity of the cure is peculiarly typical; and because the patient's profession is a guarantee of his power for accurate observation.

CHAPTER EIGHT

AUTOSUGGESTION AND MORAL ENERGY

From all that we have said concerning the practice of reflective suggestion, one essential idea must have emerged. It is that autosuggestion must not be confounded, as it is so often confounded, with the will. This is not merely a theoretical error, it is a practical error as well; for autosuggestion will not bear its full fruit unless it is formulated with a minimum of effort. Here we have the chief discovery of the New Nancy School.

I do not wish to imply that the earlier manuals of autosuggestion, those that have failed to grasp this principle, are for that reason devoid of value. But the most fertile pages in such books are those in which the author, breaking the rigidity of his erroneous system, resumes contact with the reality, even at the risk of self-contradiction. Bonnet, for instance, in his *Précis d'autosuggestion volontaire,* writes incidentally as follows:

"If it were not, for certain persons, an invitation to laziness, we might advise people to work little and to rest a great deal."

This is but the paradoxical expression of the truth on which we have to insist. The work of suggestion goes on *in the subconscious,* and has nothing to do with the *conscious* effort which presides over the will. We may say that suggestion is a form of will, but of *subconscious will.*

Proportionally to its results, this subconscious labour seems to induce much less fatigue than the work which is the outcome of conscious effort—unless, indeed, in the

former case, astonished by the results, we fancy ourselves to have been wearied by the stupendous task which seems to have been performed. As a general rule, suggestion appears to fatigue us no more than sleep with its dreams fatigues us. Yet sleep with its dreams represents a considerable amount of work; but work in which voluntary effort is reduced to a minimum, as in suggestion itself. This harmonizes with the teachings of contemporary physiology.

"In reflex contractures, there is no perceptible fatigue. In hysterical patients, such contractures may last for an indefinite period, without the patient being aware of any feeling of fatigue. . . . The cause of fatigue is voluntary effort, and not the mere muscular contraction."[1]

Our state of mind at the moment when we perform an autosuggested action is not a state of volition, not a state of tension. The suggested act surges up from the depths of our being, whereas the voluntary act emanates from the superficial strata of consciousness. The condition must rather be compared to what Beaunis terms "somnambulist vigil," the state in which a posthypnotic suggestion is carried out. As an exercise in autosuggestion, we may tell ourselves overnight that on the morrow, at some specified hour, we must without fail perform one or more of those trifling actions which we are apt to forget owing to their lack of interest—things which people try to remind themselves to do by tying a knot in the pocket-handkerchief—the purchase of a box of matches, the trying on of some new clothes, and the like. We shall really have succeeded in conveying the

[1] Charles Richet, Physiologie des muscles et des nerfs, Paris, 1882.

desired suggestion if, next day at the appointed hour, the idea of the proposed action suddenly comes into the mind as if someone had whispered it to us. Still better will it be if, when we are out walking, we find ourselves, *without having consciously willed it,* at the door of the right shop.

Autosuggestion, therefore, may be said to be practically at the antipodes of the ordinary will. Does this imply that it is "an invitation to laziness"; that it turns us away from healthy activity; that it slackens our energy? Nothing of the kind.

Abramowsky, head of the laboratory in the Warsaw Psychological Institute, has conducted a series of interesting experiments from which he concludes that *the energy manifested by anyone during life is in direct ratio with his power for plunging himself into a condition of autohypnosis.*[1]

In these experiments the subject has, as far as he is able, to inhibit the psychogalvanic reflex. His hand is so placed that the slightest muscular movement will lead to the passage of an electric current and the consequent deflection of a galvanometric needle. The stronger the movement, the greater the deflection of the needle. A sudden noise, such as a gunshot or a shout, or a flash of light, will arouse an emotion, and the galvanometer will measure the intensity of this emotion. In a first series of experiments, the subject is asked to yield to his impulse. In a second series, he is asked to resist, to control his emotion, to inhibit his reflex muscular response. A comparison is made between the galvanometric record in

[1] Abramowsky, Etudes expérimentales sur la volonté, Journal de psychologie normale et pathologique, 1915.

the former case and in the latter. In certain subjects, the amplitude of the deflection is always considerably less when voluntary inhibition has been at work; and we may say that in such persons inhibition has been successful, that they are really masters of themselves. Abramowsky questions them as to their mental state during the experiment, and he finds a general agreement as to the replies. The subject isolates himself in the thought of the test, in the thought of its successful performance; he makes a mental void round this idea. In a word, he is in a state of autohypnosis and concentration. Now, it appears that in ordinary life these same persons are peculiarly energetic, exceptionally gifted in respect of self-mastery.

In other subjects, on the other hand, in those who display a feebler morale in ordinary life, there is no marked difference in the amplitude of the galvanometric deflection in the two series of experiments. Nay more, *it sometimes happens that the amplitude of deflection is regularly greater in the second series of experiments than it was in the first.* Some of the subjects, therefore, do the very reverse of what they wish. Desiring to inhibit the muscular reaction, they increase it. It seems to me that Abramowsky has paid less attention to this singular fact than it deserves. The experiments ought to be repeated with the special aim of elucidating the matter. I am confident that here will be found an experimental verification of the law of reversed effort, and a way of measuring its effects. What we already know of the working of this law justifies the inference that those who came badly out of the test must have made a great effort to succeed, but must have been full of fear that they would fail.

Abramowsky's experiments are of great interest as far as they go, for they show that those who can best realize autohypnosis (the optimum condition for autosuggestion) are likewise the most energetic.

Furthermore, the same phenomenon is verified every day by persons who practise autosuggestion with intelligence.

In this connection, let me quote the autobiographical record penned by a young woman at the Fontenay aux Roses training college to whom Coué had taught autosuggestion:

"It is above all in the mental sphere that I have been able to note such marvellous results. I am now far less subject than of old to lassitude, low spirits, despondency. Sometimes these moods return, for one often cherishes gloom, though one knows it to be harmful and depressing. That is why I think it difficult to act upon oneself as far as this matter is concerned. A word from another has far more effect, and is practically indispensable.

"Turning to a different subject, I can without fatigue do twice as much work as before. During the vacation I have been able to get through two quite extensive tasks, such as a year ago I should never have attempted. This year I systematized my work, and said: 'I can do it all; what I am undertaking is materially possible, and must therefore be morally possible; consequently I ought not to experience, and shall not experience, discouragement, hesitancy, annoyance, or slackness.'

"Having thus persuaded myself, I found myself in the condition ordinarily described in the books as the outcome of suggestion, the condition in which a stronger will acts upon a weaker.

"Nothing could stop me, nothing could prevent my

doing what I had planned to do; you might almost have said that things were done by themselves, without the slightest effort on my part. If, through some accident, I was unable to get to work until a few minutes past the appointed time, I felt a discomfort which did not pass off until I could begin the allotted task. I am still quite astonished at myself. When I return to college, I shall be able to resume my studies there to the greatest possible advantage."

A few weeks later, she wrote again:

"I cannot postpone writing to you once more. I feel that I must let you know how deeply I am indebted to you. During the holidays you initiated me into the practice of your invaluable method. When I left you to come here, and to finish my studies, my rebellious memory was a trifle improved. But above all you had restored my self-confidence. You had set me free!

"I have an indomitable will, and I have hitherto succeeded in whatever I have undertaken, but at the cost of how much mental tension! I have just delivered two lectures, and much of their success is owing to you. When preparing them, I was able to retain a calmness of mind which was practically unknown to me in similar circumstances before. You have set me free in relation to myself, and you have thus enabled me to realize my life better, to make it what I wish it to be. I used often to say to myself: 'What is the use of this scholastic life, when compared with real life with its difficulties and its serious problems? Why should one bother one's head with all this bookish stuff?' And yet, I could not help worrying. Naturally, I worried the more, the more I tried not to.

"You have set me free because, despite my best efforts

(or rather, because of my efforts), I did not know how to live in the present. I was continually endeavouring to look ahead, to strain my will that I might foresee difficulties and go out to meet them. I could never think of those I love without dreading that they might be taken from me prematurely, and might die any day. I was intensely distressed at the inadequacy of my attempts to help those with whom I lived in close association. But you have given me the wisdom I lacked; or, at least, have shown me how to acquire it by degrees. I feel that I am more fully mistress of myself. Above all, I have been able to instil into two of my companions the wisdom that is so essential to a useful and harmonious existence. As for my memory, it remains untrustworthy, and rebellious at times. But I suffer less and less in this way, and I can be patient.

"Doubtless you have treated and cured cases just as serious as mine. But persons whose heart is in their work find pleasure even in small results. The least thought that they have been helpful to others entitles them to noble and pure-minded gratification. That is why I venture to trespass on your valuable time in order to express my feeling of all that I owe to you.

"P. S.—There are few Mondays and Fridays when I fail to recall your long days of devotion. You can hardly believe how greatly I am comforted and strengthened by your example."[1]

Here are some additional instances:

At Neufchâteau, Vosges, I had occasion to teach autosuggestion to two sisters, one sixteen years of age, the

[1] Letters published in the Bulletin Ecole de Nancy, 1913 and 1914.

other seven. They continued to practise the method after I had gone away, and recently I received the following letter from their mother:

"She [the elder girl] wanted to get her certificate of competence in English. I thought that the happenings of the moment[1] would weaken her resolve, or would at least induce her to postpone its execution. Nothing of the sort. We were informed that there was practically no risk in the sea passage, and she preferred to go now, rather than wait for a few months before attaining the desired end. Her courage and energy have been a great comfort to me. This is the opposite of what should have been, for she was the consoler. . . .

"As for Titite [the younger sister], on Sunday we were out walking with some friends. She was careless enough to tear her hands rather badly on a barbed wire fence. Both of them were streaming with blood. She ran back to us laughing—not a tear, not a cry. The wounds were serious enough to need a dressing which was kept on for a whole week."

These examples, especially the latter, where the subject was a little girl of only seven, show that the practice of autosuggestion, far from reducing energy, is capable of raising it to an unprecedented extent. Let me add that in the cases just recorded no special suggestion of energy had been formulated. The energy made its appearance as a natural outcome, not preconceived, not experimentally manufactured, of the actual *practice* of autosuggestion.

[1] The reference is to the war, and to the risks of crossing the Channel. The letter dates from the end of 1915.

PART THREE

INDUCED SUGGESTION

CHAPTER ONE

AUTONOMY OF THE SUBJECT

BERNHEIM has said: "There is no hypnotism, there is only suggestion." Coué would require very little persuasion to induce him to say: "There is no suggestion, there is only autosuggestion." The significance of this would be that even when the personality of a suggester may appear to substitute itself for the personality of the subject, the latter is still in reality the chief factor. The suggestion remains intra-individual.

The cases to which allusion is made in the above paragraph are, as the reader will doubtless have realized for himself, those of *profound hypnosis* or *induced sleep*.

Even in this condition, the dependence of the subject on the hypnotizer is more apparent than real. Auguste Forel insists again and again on the large share in the phenomena which must be ascribed to the personality of the subject.[1] For, in the first place, the fact that, of all sick persons, the insane are those in whom suggestion is least successful, suffices, in Forel's opinion, to prove that the core of the phenomenon remains in the mind of the hypnotized subject. Moreover, he shows how the subject completes the suggestions made to him, completes them with the aid of elements borrowed from his own personality. From this outlook, Forel considers that suggested hallucinations furnish a decisive example. In

[1] Op. cit.

fact, if to a subject in the somnambulist state we propose a negative hallucination (that is to say, if we suggest to him that he is unable to see a real object), there ensues a hiatus in his visual field, and he invariably fills in this hiatus in some way, with the aid of a positive autosuggested hallucination. In like manner, we cannot induce a positive hallucination without this involving for the subject the production of a negative autosuggested hallucination indispensable to the occurrence of the positive hallucination. Forel explains this as follows: "We cannot see a gap in the visual field without filling it in with something, be it only with a black background. Conversely, we cannot be affected with a positive hallucination unless a portion of the visual field is covered with the hallucinatory object. If the appropriate portion of the real background be not absolutely blocked out by the hallucinatory object, it is at least rendered hazy, as happens in the case of transparent hallucinations. The same thing occurs in the case of many hallucinations of hearing and of tactile sensation. . . . One who, when lying in bed, has the hallucination that he is lying on a pincushion, can no longer feel the soft mattress."

In this domain of hallucinations (always the one which seems most impressive to the onlookers), simple experiments can be devised to prove that in ultimate analysis we have to do solely with autosuggestions. The following is Coué's favourite experiment for this purpose. He suggests, for instance, to the subject an apparition clothed in white, seen on the right-hand window pane. As he makes this suggestion, he thinks of the upper pane on the right side. The subject will see the apparition on one of the right-hand panes, but it will in most cases be on the lower pane, the one through which we usually look

out. If the suggester, though he has said "right-hand pane," has wrapped this up in a number of details so that the right-handedness may readily be overlooked, it is quite likely that the subject will see the apparition upon a left-hand pane. As for the aspect of the apparition, each subject will describe this according to his own fancy. The experiment may be varied in countless ways. It proves beyond dispute that what is realized is not the thought of the hypnotizer. The subject has heard the latter's words, and has interpreted them as would a person in the waking state. A mental image has been called up by these words, and it is this image which transforms itself into a suggestion. He sees what he has thought, not what the hypnotizer has willed. There is no question of the conduction, as by invisible wires, of the operator's thought into the subject's brain.[1] If we may say so, the subject's own thought is conducted by the subject's own nervous system.

As a general rule it is agreed that induced sleep "increases suggestibility," this signifying that in the hypnotized state the subject obeys the operator's orders better than he would obey them in the waking state; that suggestions proposed by the operator, whatever these suggestions may be, have more chance of being realized than if they were proposed to the subject in the waking state. But nothing is more liable to variation. Every practitioner has come across subjects who are less obedient in induced sleep than they are in the waking state. Those even who are most docile in the hypnotic state, none the less quite unexpectedly impose a plea of excep-

[1] The question of telepathy involves very different considerations. This problem is not raised by the ordinary manifestations of hypnotism.

tion to certain suggestions. These facts, ostensibly contradictory, are perfectly explicable on a theory of autosuggestion. Indeed, on such a theory, it is the contrary which would surprise us. The operator's suggestion can be realized solely on condition that it is accepted by the subject's mind and transformed into an autosuggestion.

Now what does this *acceptation* involve? The question is far from simple. We may say that the acceptation is not a conscious and deliberate act of will. It would be better to compare the subject's mind to a soil which may be sometimes suitable and sometimes unsuitable for the implanting of the seed of suggestion sown by the operator. In most instances, the soil has been prepared by an earlier spontaneous autosuggestion. If the subject allows himself to be hypnotized with the preconceived idea that, though he will go to sleep, the operator will be able to do nothing with him, the probable result will be (since, by a law with which we are perfectly familiar, this idea dominates his mind throughout the induced sleep) that the suggestions proposed to him will fail to take effect. Especially will this failure ensue when the subject is extremely suggestible, for then the idea which was in his mind when he was hypnotized will infallibly dominate him. On the other hand, it has often been noted that those who were absolute sceptics before they were hypnotized, those who did not even believe in the reality of the hypnotic sleep, may be exceptionally docile in the hands of the hypnotizer. We might even contend that when it has proved possible to hypnotize a sceptic, this sceptic will then be an excellent subject. The very fact of feeling sleep take possession of him has abruptly refuted his scepticism. He has been alarmed at finding his freewill escaping him—above all

if there has been a wager, and if his vanity is also at stake. It would seem that from the first onset of the symptoms of hypnosis (indistinctness of vision, sense of weight in the eyelids), such persons are seized with alarm. This emotion hastens the onset of sleep, and all the more when the subject makes adverse voluntary efforts, for these efforts are promptly reversed. Those who fancy beforehand, without always acknowledging it to themselves, that they will become mere puppets of which the hypnotizer will pull the strings, those who tremble at the thought of what they will become, are very likely to become what they dread. Such, it would seem, are the only cases in which this puppetdom actually arises. It is not a phenomenon of hypnotism, but of autosuggestion. It is not a characteristic of profound hypnosis.

When a subject who is customarily docile opposes a plea of exception to some particular suggestion, we must not attempt to explain this refusal as a deliberate exercise of will. The question is always one of the soil on which the seed has fallen. We shall find, on close examination, that the suggestion has involved some infraction of the subject's deeply-rooted tendencies, that it conflicts with his character, with his inveterate habits. If, for instance, we propose some bad action to a good man, conveying it in the form of a posthypnotic suggestion, at the appointed time the idea of performing this action will come into his mind, but he will probably have no difficulty in rejecting the prompting, just as he habitually represses other bad ideas that arise in his mind from time to time.

Speaking generally, indifferent suggestions, and those which the subject knows to be useful to him, are ac-

cepted; repugnant suggestions are spontaneously rejected. This seems to be the rule.

We must add that a very important element in this connection is the affective relationship between the subject and the operator. The subject will more readily accept suggestions from a person whom he loves, or from one in whom he has perfect confidence. Fear, like fondness, may lead to results; but these results commonly lack uniformity and are apt to be unstable.

In any case it is undesirable that the subject should become a puppet in the hands of the operator, or should imagine that he must become a puppet. Those who witness certain hypnotic séances (real or simulated) cannot fail to be struck with the precision with which certain suggestions are carried out, and the idea of the subject's absolute dependence then germinates in the mind. Or a person may have listened to an account of the "marvels of hypnotism," may have read newspaper articles or trivial stories in which the hypnotist has been represented as all-powerful. If such a person subsequently allows himself to be hypnotized, he may exhibit a state of absolute dependence; but the dependence is an autosuggestion, the outcome of a superstition about hypnotism.

The question is often mooted, "Can persons be constrained by hypnotism to the performance of a bad action?" From what has been said above, it will be obvious that in the writer's opinion the correct answer is, "Yes, if the subject imagines this to be possible." It is, therefore, of considerable importance that the superstition should be destroyed. Books that point out the dangers of hypnotism are far more dangerous than hypnotism itself.

For us, heterosuggestion, even during induced sleep, is still an autosuggestion. But we must not be interpreted as implying that this autosuggestion is an act of will on the subject's part. By now the reader will know enough about autosuggestion to realize that the imagination from which it arises is as far as possible removed from the will.

If autosuggestion be the only force at work even in induced suggestion, there follows a practical consequence of the utmost importance. Induced suggestion must not be performed by the operator for its own sake; he must regard it as *the education of the subject's power of autosuggestion.* For though the practitioner may secure brilliant or strange results by heterosuggestion, we find, whenever we probe the matter to the bottom, that he has done nothing more than liberate the subject's autosuggestions. If, however, the practitioner does not give the subject the key to autosuggestion, the latter will believe that the former's influence is the cause of everything, and the results will be apt to prove extremely fugitive. When left to himself, the subject will find that these results tend gradually to disappear. This happens all the more when, during the induced sleep, strange phenomena have occurred. In reality the phenomena of heterosuggestion are less remarkable than many spontaneous autosuggestions, but the subject ignores these latter. On the other hand, the hypnotic phenomena which he has seen produced in others and which he knows to have been produced in himself, reveal the laws of suggestion by isolating them in a way which cannot fail to strike the imagination. In like manner, electricity is now everywhere at work, and is taken as a matter of

course; but the first time a child is shown electrical experiments in the physical laboratory he feels that he is witnessing marvels. Our subject, then, believes that the hypnotizer is endowed with wonderful powers. To these powers he attributes the result, and imagines that in the absence of the cause (the hypnotizer) there can be no effect. This partly explains why profound hypnosis, in which suggestibility is apparently increased, has less marked and less lasting results than spontaneous suggestion.

There are additional reasons for dispensing as far as possible with the use of induced sleep as a general method of treatment. When we attempt to hypnotize a new patient, we rarely find that profound hypnosis, the genuine induced sleep with amnesia after waking, can be brought about on the first occasion. In many subjects, it is never perfectly attained during the whole course of treatment.[1] As a rule, we shall bring about slight or medium hypnosis (somnolence, hypotaxia); and when this has passed off the subject will remember everything that has been said and done. More or less consciously, he will then be apt to reason as follows: "The doctor was not able to put me to sleep; but he wanted to send me to sleep in order that he might cure me; therefore he will not be able to cure me." This autosuggestion becomes firmly fixed in the patient's mind, and partly or wholly

[1] I have seen a number of Bernheim's old patients. Most of them said: "I never went to sleep at all"; or, "I was still wide awake in the hypnotic sleep"; or, "I slept without sleeping"; or, "I am not sure if I was really asleep"; or, "To please him, I told him I had been asleep."—As regards the last phrase, we know that this is generally an illusion on the part of the subject; but its existence shows that the sleep, though real, was not very profound.

neutralizes the good effects of the treatment. Perhaps the practitioner will take the precaution of telling the patient that profound sleep is not necessary. But if, none the less, the practitioner makes use of methods which aim at inducing as profound a sleep as possible, if he sends all his patients to sleep in so far as he is able to do so, the subject will be likely to say to himself that somnolence is a mere makeshift, that profound hypnosis is what really counts, and that in its absence the results will be unsatisfactory.

On the other hand, when profound hypnosis ensues, the subject has no remembrance of the condition; and when we tell him to make autosuggestions through inducing an analogous condition for himself, the advice is a dead letter. Profound hypnosis, therefore, is not our ideal, when our aim is to educate autosuggestion.

These considerations, the fruit of clinical experience, and confirmed by time, have led Coué to abandon profound hypnosis as part of a general curative system. His method is now wholly based upon slight hypnosis, so slight that it can hardly be distinguished from the waking state. In the great majority of instances the method gives better results than one wholly based upon profound hypnosis. If, in exceptional cases, the induction of profound hypnosis seems indicated, it should not be exclusively employed, but should be alternated with slight hypnosis, for in the latter condition we can educate autosuggestion by making suggestions to the subject in the waking state.

This evolution of the method, which has culminated in the abandonment of profound hypnosis for all but exceptional cases, must not be identified with a parallel development realized by Dubois and Déjerine. Accord-

ing to these authors, hypnotism must be abandoned. Suggestion is to be replaced by "persuasion." The reader might suppose the distinction to be purely verbal, but there is more at stake. Dubois[1] and Déjerine[2] claim to address persuasion to the subject's *will* and *intelligence*, to his superficial consciousness. Suggestion, in their view, is dangerous, because it addresses itself to the subconscious, because it tends to be "an education in automatism." What their movement has in common with the New Nancy School is that it proposes to render the subject both master and author of his own betterment, to make him more independent of the practitioner. In this aim we are at one with Dubois and Déjerine. But the means they would employ for its attainment shows that their psychology is at fault. We are controlled by the subconscious. The fact is proved by the phenomena of spontaneous suggestion. It is impossible for us, in our turn, to exercise any control over the activities of the subconscious unless we enter into relations with it. Coué's autosuggestion is a means for opening up relationships of this kind; Dubois' and Déjerine's persuasion is not. In earlier pages I referred to the well-known powerlessness of reason and will in the struggle against passion. "Persuasion" can make its way no further than into the superficial strata of the mind. It does not bore deep enough to tap the subsoil waters, and yet its advocates claim that it can provide us with refreshing draughts. It is undeniable that Dubois and Déjerine have secured excellent results in

[1] Dubois, Les psychonévroses et leur traitement, Masson, Paris, 1904.

[2] Déjerine, Les manifestations fonctionelles des psychonévroses. Leur traitement par la psychothérapie, Masson, Paris, 1911.

actual practice; but their successes doubtless depend upon their personality, their sincerity, their devotion, which have awakened confidence in their patients and have initiated beneficial autosuggestions in the minds of these. Here, the *intelligence* plays no more than a secondary part. As for the *will*, the appeal to this faculty, as we have shown, is a disastrous error. Finally, the method of "persuasion," even in the view of its founders, has a very limited field of application when compared with the method of autosuggestion as perfected by the New Nancy School.

CHAPTER TWO

PRELIMINARY EXERCISES

THE first step in the subject's autosuggestive education is to show him, by simple experiments, how readily an idea can realize itself, provided that it exclusively occupies the mind. The subject will first see these experiments performed by others. In the next stage he will do them himself, and thus, from being mere *experiments*, they will become *exercises*.

The series of elementary exercises which I now consider most valuable, so that I have come to make a methodical use of them whereas at first I regarded them as no more than supplementary illustrations, are carried out with the aid of *Chevreul's pendulum*.

These experiments with Chevreul's pendulum occupy, in the theory of autosuggestion, the place occupied in electrical theory by the electrical pendulum—the ball of pith suspended by a silk thread. It is merely requisite to explain to the pupil that the more complex and more important phenomena of autosuggestion are no more than applications of the principle deducible from the working of Chevreul's pendulum.[1] This will enable him to grasp the whole bearing of the principle in question.

[1] M. E. Chevreul, op. cit.—In 1830 this distinguished chemist became director of the Natural History Museum in Paris. Born 1786, died 1889. Perhaps the only man of world-wide fame whose centenary has been celebrated during his lifetime.—TRANSLATORS' NOTE.

Chevreul, it will be remembered, had had his interest awakened by the "exploratory pendulum" used in his day by clairvoyants and in drawing-room séances. This pendulum, held in the medium's hand, consisted of a ring suspended by a hair. The ring hung down into a tumbler or wineglass, and answered questions put to the medium by tapping against the side of the glass, once or oftener as the case demanded. Chevreul satisfied himself that the person holding the pendulum was unaware of imparting any movement to it, and he asked himself whether the idea or simple image of a movement would not suffice to bring about this movement. A theory was current that the oscillations of the pendulum were ampler when the ring was suspended over mercury. Chevreul had little difficulty in proving that the mercury had no influence whatever. He demonstrated that the subject's thought (not his will) was the sole cause of the oscillations. This thought acted through the intermediation of imperceptible movements, which were involuntary and unconscious (subconscious).

Starting from Chevreul's classical experiments, I have devised the following exercises, and every one of my new pupils has to perform them.

Materials. In the middle of a sheet of white paper draw a circle, O. Draw a line AB passing through the centre of O. Draw another line CD, perpendicular to AB, likewise passing through the centre of O. These must stand out very distinctly on the white surface. Place the sheet on the ground or on the table in front of the subject, so that the line AB runs from left to right across his field of vision, while the line CD runs from near to far. Give the subject the pendulum, which resembles a miniature fishing rod and line, the pendant be-

ing a *small, heavy,* and preferably *shining* body. The rod and the line should each be about eight inches in length. An ordinary pencil will serve for the rod. The bob of the pendulum should weigh about as much as a new shilling piece. The pupil takes the rod in his hand, and is asked to hold himself upright, but not to press the elbow nervously against the side. It would be a mistake for him to assume a position which would hinder his freedom of movement. The bob of the pendulum will be set in motion, not by any mysterious currents, but by the pupil's own movements, real though imperceptible. These movements must take place *quite independently* of his will. He must be unaware of them or rather, must become aware of them only after they have taken place, so that he regards them objectively, as spectator and not as actor.

First Exercise. The pupil is requested to hold the pendulum in such a way that the bright bob occludes the centre of the circle. The pendant will not be vertically above the centre, but somewhere on the straight line between the centre and the pupil's eye. To get the correct position, the pupil may close one eye. He is now asked to let his mind dwell on the line AB, following it mentally from one end to the other. He is not to make any attempt to swing the pendulum, but is on the contrary to aim at keeping it motionless. We add that there is no difficulty in "thinking well" about the line. It must be done without effort. Enough, we say, to look at the line without losing sight of the bob. In these conditions, we inform him, the pendulum will begin to swing in the direction AB, so that the bob will pass to and fro along this line. It may be well at the same time to sketch out somewhere in the pupil's visual field, with

the finger, with a ruler, or with another pendulum, on a line parallel with AB, a to-and-fro movement which will help to call up in his mind the idea of the expected movement of the pendulum he holds. (This is an accessory, often useful in the early stages, but needless when the experiment has become familiar.) In these circumstances, after a few seconds, or after a few minutes at the outside, the pendulum begins to swing. The amplitude of the oscillations rapidly increases, so much so that some persons feel that the devil must be at work, and drop the bewitched pendulum as if it burned their fingers. But of course this alarm is rare. The very reason why I select the experiment for the initiation into autosuggestion is that it does not seem overwhelmingly marvellous, and is none the less surprising enough to arouse in the pupil an emotional state extremely favourable to suggestion. Children, in especial, do not take fright. They are astonished at first, then amused, and they seldom fail to make a pendulum of their own, so that they can renew the exercise for themselves. This, indeed, is an additional advantage of the experiment. Everyone can easily reproduce it at his own time and pleasure, thus convincing himself that the master's will has nothing to do with the causation of the phenomena, and that they are really the outcome of autosuggestion.

There is yet another good point about this exercise. The shining bob and its regular oscillations tend imperceptibly to induce a slight degree of hypnosis, and this favours suggestion. Spontaneously, therefore, the pupil has learned what is the condition into which he must pass if he is to make effective suggestions to himself.

Finally, when the experiment above described has been perfectly successful, we can easily convince the

pupil, by drawing his attention to the matter, that the more he tries to keep the bob at rest the more ample are its oscillations. This will reveal to him the law of reversed effort.

Second Exercise. The foregoing exercise may now be varied so as to show the pupil how accurately thought transforms itself into visible reality.

While the pendulum is swinging vigorously to and fro along the line AB, we ask the pupil to transfer his thought to the line CD, telling him that the pendulum will spontaneously vary the direction of its swing. If this result be slow in coming, it will be because the subject is hampered by the visual obsession of the movement AB. In that case it will be necessary to put the pendulum at rest. But in most instances this will be superfluous, and the change in the direction of movement will take place without any difficulty.

How does the change occur? Sometimes, the oscillations AB grow less and less extensive, the pendulum becomes motionless, and a moment later the swing in the new direction begins. In other instances, the oscillation AB becomes rounded into an ellipse, with its foci lying over the line CD; gradually this ellipse grows longer and narrower, and is ere long reduced to a line coincident with CD. In yet other cases, the bob continues to swing in a single plane, but the line representing that plane rotates gradually on the centre of the circle O until the line of swing has moved from AB to CD.

If, however, we ask the pupil how it is that a change has ensued in the direction of the oscillation, he is usually unable to answer. His awareness of what has been going on in his mind has been minimal. This fact enables us to reveal to an intelligent pupil the law of subcon-

scious teleology. He has thought the end, and nothing but the end, and his subconscious has devoted its ingenuity to the finding of means (any means will serve) for the attainment of that end. We add: "All healing, all improvement, depends upon the production of movements in one part of the body or another, but it is needless for you to know what these movements are in order that you may bring them about. You need merely think of the end, the cure. You have just learned that your subconscious is a clever physicist. He is just as good a physiologist, and he will find the mean for the fulfilment of the end of which you think he will find them without your knowing anything about the matter."

Third Exercise. Ask the subject to think of the circle, and the movement will become circular. The change may take place by way of motionlessness or by way of an elliptical swing. In a sense this exercise is intermediate between the two foregoing, and we may therefore transpose No. 2 and No. 3. But in passing directly from AB to CD we get a more obvious demonstration of the law of subconscious teleology, for here there is more variety in the choice of means.

Whereas in the linear oscillations there are two points of rest alternating with the motion of the swing, the circular movement is continuous. It may therefore acquire such speed and amplitude that the thread rises nearly to a horizontal plane. When the experiment has reached this stage, the pupil is quite able to isolate himself in a thought. In that case, instead of drawing his attention post factum to the law of reversed effort, we may demonstrate this law by a special exercise, as follows:

Fourth Exercise. Without stopping the movement of the pendulum, we ask the subject to think: "I cannot

stop it." At the same time he is to make efforts to stop it. It will then become apparent that such efforts serve only to increase the activity of the movement, which may become so rapid that the bob ceases to be visible. But directly the pupil discontinues these efforts and lets his thoughts dwell on immobility, the movement grows slower and its amplitude diminishes.

Fifth Exercise. The pupil still holds the pendulum by the handle. In front of him we place an upright placard on which are drawn several letters of the alphabet, ranged along a single horizontal line. The shining bob must be at the level of the letters, and at such a distance that it can strike them in its swing. We begin by asking the subject to think of the fore-and-aft direction. As soon as movement in this direction has been established, we tell him to think of a letter. Without the handle having been displaced in any way, the pendulum changes its plane of oscillation in order to touch the letter thought of. When facility in this exercise has been gained, the placard may have the entire alphabet written on it, still in a single line, and therefore rather small. The pupil must now mentally spell a word, and thereupon each letter as he thinks of it is successively touched by the bob.

One of the most interesting features in this series of experiments is the precision displayed by the subconscious. It often, in this respect, shows greater skill than is seen in the subject's voluntary movements. We take the opportunity of explaining to the pupil that what he has just witnessed and realized is not an exceptional experience, but the manifestation of a general law. We give him typical and concrete instances of spontaneous suggestion, emphasizing at the same time the law of reversed

effort. These explanations must be adapted to his intellectual attainments.

In suitable circumstances, the experiments with Chevreul's pendulum may be supplemented by a demonstration of the well-known phenomena of *cumberlandism.* The pupil is asked to hide some object. He then holds your hand—you, of course, not knowing the hiding-place. He is to concentrate his mind on the thought of this hiding-place. Thereupon, thinking of a direction, he unconsciously impresses on his whole frame, and upon his hand in particular, movements in that direction. You have merely to allow yourself to be guided by these movements in order, in due course, to be able to put your fingers on the hidden object.[1]

Obviously the experiment must be explained to the pupil, if it is to bear fruit in his mind. He must not be allowed to suppose, after the manner of those who witness such feats at fairs or in drawing-rooms, that the discovery of the hidden object is effected by thought-transference. What we have to show him is that as soon as we think sufficiently hard of a movement, our whole body begins to make this movement.

This may serve as an introduction to some account of the way in which our sayings and doings continually reveal what is going on in our subconscious, and to a demonstration that our mental attitude is in the end supreme over events and over what are termed chance happenings.

A good exercise, less new in principle than those with

[1] This experiment is certain to be successful with persons who have had good results with Chevreul's pendulum, and have thus shown themselves extremely sensitive to the ideoreflex force.

Chevreul's pendulum, but well fitted to succeed them, is that of *falling backwards and forwards.*

You ask the pupil to stand upright, the body as stiff as a poker, the feet in close apposition (toes as well as heels), but the ankles being kept flexible, like a well-oiled hinge. Tell him that he is, in fact, to stand like a plank jointed to the floor by hinges, but balanced in an upright position. Point out to him that if such a plank be pulled very gently either forwards or backwards, after it has moved a fraction of an inch it will fall as a rigid mass, unresistingly, forwards if it has been pulled forwards, and backwards if it has been pulled backwards. Tell him you are now going to draw him back by the shoulders, and that he is to allow himself to fall backwards into your arms, unresistingly, turning on his ankles as if they were hinges, while his feet remain motionless as if nailed to the ground.

As soon as he has carried out these orders successfully, you go on to inform him that in the state of unstable equilibrium in which he is now placed, the material impulsion which you communicated to him when you drew his body backwards may perfectly well be replaced by the impulsion of a *thought.* The pupil will merely have to think, "I am falling backwards. I am falling backwards," without meditating in the least as to the consequences of the fall, and he will actually feel himself falling into your arms.[1]

[1] This is advised by Coué as a preliminary experiment. But of late he has dispensed with it, and has contented himself with the experiments to be subsequently described. He finds that the subject is in most cases sufficiently prepared by the emotional atmosphere of the collective sittings—and by the preliminary suggestion exercised by the practitioner's reputation.

To bring this experiment to a successful issue, the experimenter will find it well, as a rule, to sketch out a movement which will help to impress on the pupil's mind the idea, "I am falling backwards," just as in the practice with Chevreul's pendulum it was well for the instructor to move his finger in the direction indicated by his words. The procedure, then, is as follows. Having requested the pupil to hold his head erect and to close his eyes, you will apply your right fist to the back of his neck and your left hand to his forehead. Saying to him several times, "You are falling backwards," or, "Think, 'I am falling backwards,'" you gently draw the left hand backwards over the pupil's temple, without exercising the slightest pressure, and at the same time you slowly but continuously withdraw the right fist.

These manipulations are superfluous in the case of persons who are exceptionally sensitive or who have already had considerable practice in the exercise.

The experiment is likewise practised in the inverse way. The pupil, still in the same attitude of unstable equilibrium, is asked to think, "I am falling forwards," and he actually does begin to fall forwards. This time, since you are facing the pupil, you can tell him to keep his eyes fixed on yours, while you reciprocate. In this manner you will induce a moderate degree of hypnosis, which will be an aid to suggestion.

Another experiment, more striking, which will succeed at the first trial with everyone who has proved very sensitive in the foregoing experiments, is that of the *chair*.

The pupil stands upright behind a chair. He places his hands horizontally on the upper edge of the back, with his thumbs strongly applied to the posterior surface

of the back. He then concentrates his thoughts on the idea: "The chair is rearing up on its hind legs, the chair is pushing me, the chair is rising." At the same time he stares hard at the back, between his thumbs, and presses with the thumbs strongly as if to resist the attempted movement of the chair. But the stronger his resistance, the more rapidly does the chair rear on its hind legs, sometimes with such force that I have seen the subject actually *thrown backwards to the ground.* (It is a wise precaution, therefore, to stand behind him.)

What has happened? Dwelling on the idea that the chair is going to rear, the subject has unconsciously, with the palms of his hands as fulcrums, and in opposition to his conscious efforts with the thumbs, performed all the muscular movements requisite to make the chair rise on its hind legs.

This last exercise will only succeed, as a rule, in persons who have had a certain amount of training. Moreover, there are some subjects who find a difficulty in grasping the state of mind it implies. But the earlier exercises, those with Chevreul's pendulum, and the falling backwards and forwards, are easily performed by everyone.

The pupil should be asked to reproduce them unaided, not merely for practice, but also that he may convince himself that the active force is really that of autosuggestion. The exercise with the pendulum is a good one to repeat before making suggestions to oneself. It may be classed among "exercises in concentration." Moreover, it is excellent for persons who have never witnessed a sitting, and who wish unaided to train themselves in reflective suggestion.

CHAPTER THREE

COUÉ'S PRACTICE

From the exercises above described, or from some of them, the pupil may pass to experiments in contracture and inhibition, such as are more familiar to the practitioners of classical hypnotism. At the present time, Coué begins and ends with these. In the conditions under which he operates, they seem to him sufficient. We shall now, therefore, describe the working of Coué's clinic.

It will be well to use his own words in most instances. He describes in the following terms the principle of the experiments in contracture and inhibition:

"Request the subject to clasp his hands and to do so as firmly as possible, until slight tremor ensues. Look fixedly into the subject's eyes, as in the last experiment.[1] Place your hands on his, with a gentle pressure, as if you were going to press more strongly. Tell him to think he is unable to unclasp the fingers, that you are going to count up to three, and that when you say 'three' he must endeavour to separate his hands, thinking all the while, 'I cannot, I cannot, etc.,' and that he will find it impossible to do so. Then count, 'one, two, three,' very slowly, and immediately add, spacing out the syllables, 'You can not, you can not, etc.' If the subject lets his mind

[1] Falling forwards.

dwell adequately on the thought, 'I cannot,' not merely will he be unable to unclasp the hands, but they will grasp one another the more firmly the greater the efforts he makes to separate them. In fact, he will arrive at a result the exact opposite of that which he wishes to attain. After a few seconds say to him, 'Now think, "I can," ' and his fingers will become unclasped.

"Keep your gaze continually fixed on the root of the subject's nose, and do not permit him to turn his eyes away from yours for a moment.

"If the experimenter finds that the subject can unclasp the hands, the experimenter must not think that this is his own fault; it is the subject's fault. The subject has not thought well 'I can not.' Tell him so in confident tones, and repeat the experiment.

"Always use a tone of command, the accents of one who will not tolerate disobedience. I do not mean that the voice should be raised. On the contrary, it is better to speak in your ordinary diapason; but you should space out the syllables in a dry and imperative manner.

"When this experiment has been successful, success will readily be obtained in all the others, provided the experimenter conforms strictly to the instructions given above.

"Some subjects are extremely sensitive, and those of this type can be readily recognized from the ease with which contracture of their fingers and of their limbs can be induced. After two or three thoroughly successful experiments, it is no longer necessary to say to them, 'Think this, think that.' It suffices to say in the commanding tone employed by every good suggester: 'Clench your fist; now you can't unclench it'; or, 'Close your eyes; now you can't open them.' Thereupon, try

as he may, the subject will be unable to unclench his fist, will be unable to open his eyes. A few seconds later say, 'You can,' and the contracture instantly passes off.

"These experiments can be varied as much as you please. Here are some of the variations: the subject places his hands in apposition, and you suggest to him that they have stuck together; he lays his hand on the table and is told that it has adhered to the surface; you tell him that he is glued to his chair and cannot rise; you make him stand up and then tell him he is unable to walk; you show him a penholder lying on the table, tell him it weighs two hundredweight, and that it is therefore too heavy for him to lift; and so on.

"I cannot insist too often upon the fact that in all these experiments the phenomena are not due to *suggestion* properly so called. They are the outcome of the *autosuggestion* which, in the subject's mind, ensues upon the practitioner's suggestion."[1]

Such experiments, as we have said, are familiar to everyone who practises hypnotism. But it is necessary to insist upon the original features they exhibit as performed in Coué's practice.

1. In the first place they are put before the pupil as exercises in autosuggestion, and not as experiments in suggestion. The practitioner begins more or less as follows: "You have come here in search of someone who can cure you. You are on the wrong track. I have never cured anyone. I merely teach people to cure themselves. I have taught many persons to cure themselves, and that is what I am going to teach you. The experiments in which you are about to participate will

[1] Emile Coué, De la suggestion et de ses applications, Barbier, Nancy, 1915, pp. 13 and 14.

always succeed, even if they should seem to fail. For I have never claimed that my thought can realize itself in you. My claim has always been that each person's own thought realizes itself in himself. If, therefore, at the moment when I ask you to think, 'I cannot unclasp my hands,' you think, on the contrary, 'I can,' you will inevitably be able to unclasp them. You may imagine that you have convicted me of error, but in reality you will have proved the soundness of the principle of autosuggestion."

Apart from the educative value of this method of procedure, it has an immediate practical advantage. If an experiment fails, the pupil attributes the failure to his own unskilfulness, and not to the practitioner's impotence. Consequently, he does not lose confidence in the latter.

2. These considerations serve partly to explain the second characteristic whereby Coué's practice is differentiated. I refer to the fact that in his clinic the experiments in contracture are carried out when the subject is in the waking state (or, if you will, in a condition of very slight hypnosis), and that they nevertheless are almost invariably successful, if not at the first attempt, at least after a few trials. Moreover, as has already been hinted, for an explanation of this astounding facility, we must take into account certain causes foreign to the actual procedure. These causes will now be enumerated.

The Nancy sittings are collective. On the average about thirty persons are present at each. While a sitting is in progress, a great many patients are waiting their turn in the garden or in an adjoining room, each with a numbered ticket allotted to him on arrival.

Everyone knows the reputation of the clinic. To the simple-minded it is a place where Coué works miracles. For the first time in the history of mankind, a genuinely scientific practitioner is the object of a collective faith analogous to that inspired in earlier days by certain mystics and charlatans. *The public on which Coué acts by suggestion is a public on which suggestion has already been at work.* It is not surprising that, with such a public, he has no need to employ preliminary exercises.

Furthermore, the sitting itself is methodically utilized to superadd the force of example to the force of this preliminary suggestion based on reputation. The newcomers sit among persons who have already attended numerous sittings, and who make no secret of their progress towards health. From sitting to sitting, each patient can see how the others improve, can see how paralytics walk, how the deaf hear. Besides, the exercises are repeated by the old patients under the eyes of the new; and not until then do the new patients make trial for themselves. In these conditions, in such an atmosphere, it is natural that experiments in the production of contracture should almost invariably succeed after Coué has looked the patient in the eyes for a few seconds. We can understand why he has found it possible to discontinue the preliminary exercise of falling backwards or forwards.

In my own view, exercises in contracture should not be invariably prescribed as preliminary exercises. It is from necessity rather than on account of their intrinsic value that Coué has chosen them for this purpose. They can be realized more speedily than others, and speed is of the first importance to one who has to convey suggestions to a hundred persons or more daily.

Nevertheless, as preliminary exercises, these exercises in contracture are not free from drawbacks. Although they are rendered more acceptable to the pupil by the idea that their essential cause is autosuggestion, none the less there remains in his mind the feeling that a suggestion of impotence has been conveyed, that in greater or less degree there has been an attempt to limit his free-will. To many persons this is distasteful. Even when the experiment succeeds, their vanity sets repression to work, and they persuade themselves that there was little success or none. To a large extent this conviction is illusory, like the familiar belief, on the part of the subject who has been completely hypnotized, that he did not really go to sleep. But the illusion suffices to neutralize the good effects of the experiment. Were it not that the pupil's confidence is reanimated by the contagion of example, by the sight of the cures worked upon others, it is probable that the results would be unsatisfactory.

That is why I consider it preferable, as a matter of principle, to begin with *exercises which give the subject the feeling that he is increasing his own powers,* rather than with those which suggest impotence. Then there will be no unavowed thoughts. Particularly valuable in this respect are the exercises with Chevreul's pendulum, where the subject is amazed and delighted to find that, by his thought, he gives movement, and, so to say, life, to an inert object.[1]

[1] Children who perform this experiment have the feeling that the bob of the pendulum is alive. That is why they find the experiment so fascinating. A little Russian boy said to me: "I speak to my bob; I say to it, 'Go to the right, turn in a circle, stop.' And I speak to it in Russian, for it understands Russian better than French."

On the other hand, we are so much accustomed to do whatever we like with our hands, that experiments tending to produce contracture of the hands are apt at first to seem incredible. For this reason, they may fail. Even if they succeed, we are very ready to think we have deceived ourselves. But when some apparatus with which we are entirely unfamiliar, such as Chevreul's pendulum, is put into our hands, we are unprejudiced, and are quite willing to expect novelties from its use.

I must not be understood to imply that Coué's methods, as above described, ought to be abandoned. Their very inconveniences have, as obverse, advantages which are no less real. Their incredibility, once the pupil has recognized that these marvels actually happen, serves but to heighten conviction and to impress the imagination. As for the suggestion of powerlessness, it is an excellent means for throwing into relief the law of reversed effort. This is why Coué, for whom this law is the chief guiding principle, prefers the methods he has chosen.

Whatever may be the rights of the matter, I opine that in ordinary practice it will be better to begin with other exercises. These will very likely suffice. Experiments in contracture may be reserved for especially sensitive subjects, in whom they are certain to succeed. For the rest, we should assure our pupils that *all the exercises have the same educative value,* and that it matters little which particular group is chosen for practice.

Having made these reservations, I will return to the exposition of Coué's methods, and will once more allow him to speak for himself.

"When the subject has passed through the foregoing experiments, he is ripe for curative suggestions. His

mind is tilled soil, in which the seed can germinate and grow to maturity. Before, it was uncultivated ground, where the seed would have perished from drought.

"Whatever the patient's trouble may be, whether bodily or mental, the same procedure is applicable, and the same formulas are employed, with trifling individual variations.

"You say to the subject: 'Sit down and close your eyes. I shall not attempt to put you to sleep, for it is needless. I ask you to close your eyes for the simple reason that I do not wish your attention to be distracted by the objects within your field of vision. Now say to yourself earnestly that all the words I am going to utter will fix themselves in your mind, will be graven there, that they must always remain fixed and graven there, permanently impressed, so that, without any exercise of will, without your knowing anything about the matter, quite unconsciously on your part, your organism and yourself will have to obey them. I tell you first of all that every day, three times a day, morning, noon, and evening, at mealtimes, you will be hungry, that is to say, you will experience that pleasant sensation which makes us think and say, "Oh how I should like something to eat!" You will, in fact, eat with great satisfaction, but you will never overeat yourself. You will eat enough, neither too much nor too little, and you will know that you have eaten enough when something says within you, "You have eaten enough." Then you will stop, for you must eat no more. In these conditions, having eaten with appetite, and having eaten no more than you should, you will digest well, that is to say, you will have no discomfort whatever, either in the stomach or in the bowel, no uneasiness or pain of any kind. Assimilation will be

perfectly performed, and your organism will make the best possible use of the food to form blood, muscle, strength, energy—in a word, to create life.

" 'Since you have digested well, the excretory functions will be well performed. Every morning, on rising, you will feel a desire to go to stool. Without the use of laxative medicines, and without recourse to any other artificial means, you will have normal and satisfactory evacuations.

" 'Every night, as soon as you wish, you will go to sleep, and you will go on sleeping until the time at which you wish to wake next morning. You will sleep calmly, soundly, quietly. You will have no nightmare. When you wake up you will always feel well, cheerful, thoroughly fit.

" 'If you have sometimes been melancholy, gloomy, out of sorts, filled with forebodings, henceforward you will be free from such troubles. Instead of being moody, bored, unhappy, anxious, you will be cheerful, thoroughly cheerful, happy with no good reason for it perhaps, but then in the past you may often have been unhappy with no good reason for it. Nay more, even if you have serious cause for unhappiness, for melancholy, you will have no such feelings.

" 'If, at times, you have been impatient or angry, you will no longer be anything of the kind. On the contrary, you will always be patient, and henceforward the happenings which used to irritate you will leave you perfectly unmoved.

" 'If you have occasionally been haunted by evil and unwholesome ideas, by fears or by phobias, I assure you that these ideas, these fears, these phobias, will gradually cease to trouble your imagination; they will seem to

melt away, to pass into a distant cloud where everything vanishes.

"'I add that all your organs work perfectly. Your heart beats normally and the circulation goes on as it should. The lungs act well. The stomach, the intestine, the liver, the gall-bladder, the kidneys, the urinary bladder—all do their duty. If any one of the organs named is actually out of order, the disturbance will lessen day by day, so that within a brief period it will have entirely disappeared, and the normal function will have been restored.

"'If, in any organ, some structural lesion should exist, this physical disorder will rapidly be relieved, and a complete cure will speedily ensue.' (I should mention that we can cure an affected organ without knowing that it is actually out of order. Under the influence of the autosuggestion, 'the affected organ will be restored to health,' the unconscious, which knows what organ is involved, will do all that is required.)

"To these general suggestions, which may seem perhaps a trifle tedious, and which to some may even appear childish, but which are *indispensable*, must be added those which apply to the special case of the individual subject you are treating.

"All these suggestions must be made in monotonous and soothing accents, with due stress on the more essential words. Your tone should invite the subject, if not actually to fall asleep, at least to grow somewhat torpid, so that his mind becomes a blank.

"When the list of suggestions is finished, you address the subject as follows: 'To sum up, I mean that in all respects, alike physically and mentally, you will henceforward enjoy excellent health, better health than you

have hitherto enjoyed. Now I am going to count up to three. At the word, "three," you will pass out of the condition in which you now are, will pass out of it quite quietly. When you do so, you will wake up thoroughly; you will not feel drowsy or tired; on the contrary, you will feel strong, alert, fit, full of life and vigour; furthermore, you will feel bright and cheerful, will feel well in every respect. "One, two, three." '

"At the word 'three,' the subject opens his eyes, smiles, and has an expression of contentment and well-being.

"Sometimes, though this rarely happens, he is cured on the spot. More often, he is better, his pain or his distress of mind has wholly or partly disappeared, but only for a season.

"In any case, the suggestions must be renewed from time to time. The requisite frequency varies in different subjects. Always, as improvement is more marked, the intervals between the sittings can be extended, until the time arrives when the treatment can be completely discontinued—this of course being when cure has taken place.

"Before dismissing the patient, tell him that he carries within him the means of cure; that you yourself are merely an instructor, who can teach him how to use this means; and that he must aid you in your task.

"Every morning, therefore, before rising, and every evening as soon as he has gone to bed, he is to close his eyes and to imagine himself in your presence. Then he must repeat fifteen or twenty times the phrase: *'Day by day, in all respects, I get better and better.'* As he does this he must mentally underline *'in all respects,'* since this includes every kind of trouble, mental as well as

bodily. Such general suggestion is more potent than particular suggestions.

"From what has been said it is easy to grasp the rôle of the suggester. He is not a master who issues orders; he is a friend; he is a guide who conducts the patient, step by step, along the road to health.

"Since all the suggestions are made in the patient's interest, his unconscious asks no better than permission to assimilate them and to transform them into autosuggestions. When this has been done, cure follows more or less rapidly."[1]

At collective sittings, the general suggestions, which are the same for all the patients, are formulated once only. When the time has come for individual suggestions, the practitioner goes up to each patient in turn, touches him, and speaks to him of the topics with which he is specially concerned. Veiled terminology can be employed in relation to any matter to which open allusion might be indiscreet. While these individual suggestions are in progress, the patients who are not at the moment engaging the practitioner's attention remain motionless, with eyes closed and muscles relaxed. The monotonous tone of the operator is intended to exercise a soothing influence, and does in fact lull the patients. This is the only hypnotizing factor, and it proves sufficient, without arousing alarm in anyone. The hypnosis thereby induced, commonly the slightest degree of hypnosis, is just as natural as that brought about by a cradle-song, or that due to the rustling of branches in the breeze which lulls you to sleep as you lie beneath a tree. We are at the very antipodes of the barbarous methods of the Salpêtrière school.

[1] Coué, op. cit., pp. 14-17.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCRETE RESULTS

(*Suggestion and Psychoanalysis*)

Liébault and Bernheim declared that they succeeded in conveying effective suggestions to at least 90% of their subjects. Vogt and Forel speak of successes with 97%. Coué claims to have exceeded the latter percentage by a few tenths. He considers, in fact, that only two classes of persons are permanently rebellious to the exercises, and consequently refractory to the method. In his own words, these classes are composed of:

"1. Persons whose mental development is so backward that they cannot understand what you say to them.

"2. Persons whose level of intellectual culture is high, but who are so fickle-minded that they are incapable of *consciously* devoting their attention to a single idea for the space of a few seconds."[1]

He adds that these two classes, taken together, "represent barely 3% of the population."[2]

Let me add that, in my own view, persons in the second class ought not to be abandoned without a trial. Moreover, as I have shown, certain persons are rebellious to contracture experiments for reasons very different from inconstancy of mind. In any case, by the use of the pendulum experiments we can unquestionably increase the proportion of persons found amenable. Provisionally I feel entitled to speak of about 98% of the population as susceptible. Future experience will enable us to obtain more precise statistics.

[1] Op. cit., p. 11. [2] Op. cit., p. 17.

If by the new methods we can secure but little increase in the proportion of *persons* amenable to suggestion (and, indeed, above 97% there is not much scope for increase), it might none the less seem that we could hope to secure a considerable increase in the proportion of *cases* amenable to suggestive treatment. Unfortunately a "case" is a less definite entity than a person, and percentages here would be artificial. But this much can be asserted. The method expounded in the present work has secured incontestable results *in cases alleged to be incurable, in patients given up by practitioners employing only the conventional methods of treatment.* The statement conflicts with received ideas, but we must bow before the facts. There are, of course, systematists who persist in denying facts in the name of principle—as if a principle were anything more than a formula synthetizing a certain number of known facts; as if a principle could refuse to grant new facts the right to contradict it. Those who will deny a fact in the name of a principle are like a child which, having seen lions only in cages, denies a priori that lions can exist free. As Arago said, he is a rash man who pronounces the word "impossible" anywhere outside the sphere of pure mathematics.

Let us dismiss theory for the nonce, and let us examine the facts. These facts have been observed under conditions which give guarantees for all desirable accuracy of observation.

In the psychonervous domain, the methods of the New Nancy School have given remarkable results in cases where ordinary psychotherapy had failed. Here are two striking instances:

1. Y., of Nancy, neurasthenic for some years past, suffers from phobias, from terrors. The gastric and intestinal functions are badly performed. He does not sleep well. He is gloomy, and is troubled with thoughts of suicide. He sways like a drunken man when he walks. His mind dwells unceasingly on his symptoms. *Treatment has hitherto proved unavailing, and he continually grows worse. A month at a special institution did him no good whatever.* The patient consulted Coué in the beginning of October, 1910. The preliminary experiments were fairly easy. The practitioner explained the autosuggestive method, the existence of the unconscious, etc. Suggestion. For two or three days Y. found these explanations rather difficult to follow. Then the light broke in upon him. "I understand," he said.—Suggestion, followed by daily autosuggestion. Improvement was slow at first, but soon became more speedy. *A complete cure was effected in six weeks.*[1]

2. R. de B. has suffered from neurasthenia for *more than twenty years.* Has consulted celebrated specialists in Nancy (Bernheim), Paris, Strasburg, Berne (Dubois), etc. Has paid long visits to some of these specialists, but the results have always been negative. Came to consult Coué in July, 1915. Improvement followed the very first visit. After each consultation a further advance could be noted, and at the end of three months the patient declared himself "well, and indeed very well"—the bombardment of the city notwithstanding.[2]

The cure of neurasthenia is often unexpectedly rapid. Let me give another of Coué's cases, which is typical:

A lady came to consult him. Her sister had suffered

[1] Op. cit., p. 24.

[2] Unpublished.—Privately reported to Baudouin by Coué.

from neurasthenia complicated with various functional troubles, and had been cured by the Nancy method. The new patient likewise suffered from neurasthenia, in an extremely aggravated form. She spent quite half her time in bed, utterly unable to get about or to do any work. She had a bad appetite, poor digestion, low spirits.—Cure followed a single sitting.—The case was followed up for two years, during which time there was no relapse.

It is impossible to find room for cases of all functional and organic diseases. The reader must be content with a record of instances where the results have been exceptionally striking or peculiarly novel.

I

In the study of spontaneous suggestion, special mention was made of the action of the mother's brain upon the fœtus, of the action of the mind on the mechanisms of pregnancy, childbirth, etc.—Induced suggestion has been proved to exercise a notable influence upon the female pelvic organs.

Coué has repeatedly found that, on the average, his method will cure severe metritis in six weeks. Here are some examples:

1. Woman suffering from metritis and salpingitis. Considerable relief was noted after the first sitting. Complete cure in five weeks, confirmed by the patient's regular medical attendant. (1915.)

2. Woman aged 30, metritis of six years' duration. Her doctor considered operation indispensable. Dreading this, the patient wished to try suggestion as a last resort. Cure was instantaneous, the success being doubt-

less due in large measure to the emotional state arising from the fear of operation. Kept under observation for six months, during which there was no relapse. (1915.)

3. Woman aged 28, metritis and salpingitis of long standing (several years). Same result. (1915.)

4. Woman aged 60; metritis for the last twenty-four years; grows steadily worse. Operation thought indispensable. Complete cure in six weeks from suggestive treatment. Confirmed by the surgeon who had been going to operate. (1915.)[1]

These examples of recent date have been chosen because of their striking characteristics. Earlier instances, which it is needless to record, show that the cures are lasting.

The New Nancy School has to its credit several cases in which typical fibromata have completely disappeared under treatment. This phenomenon does not differ in essence from the disappearance of a wart. As Coué has well said, the process is explicable in the same way as is the arrest of hæmorrhage by suggestion. We must assume in both cases that the vasoconstrictor system is at work. The difference lies in the duration of the suggestive action, and in the magnitude of the result.

II

We have likewise seen spontaneous suggestion at work in the cure of tuberculosis, and we have examined some of the statistics Louis Rénon has published, statistics which clearly prove the reality of this action. Since,

[1] Cases 1 and 4 were published in the Bulletin Ecole de Nancy for the year 1915. Cases 2 and 3 were privately communicated

however, in the Nancy cases, autosuggestion is systematically employed, we need not be surprised to find that Coué's results are yet more remarkable than those recorded by Rénon. (Supra, pp. 114 et seq.)

Some of his cases tend to revolutionize our views.

1. Woman of thirty, in the third stage of pulmonary consumption. Increasing emaciation, notwithstanding hyperalimentation. Cough, shortness of breath, expectoration; seems to have only a few months to live. Preliminary experiments indicate great sensitiveness. Suggestion, immediate improvement. From the next day, a decline in the morbid symptoms begins. Improvement continues from day to day; the weight increases rapidly, though hyperalimentation has been discontinued. After a few months the cure seems complete.—This patient lived at Troyes. In May, 1910, Coué finally left Troyes for Nancy. On January 1, 1911, Madame D. wrote him a letter of thanks, informing him that she was pregnant, and was in splendid health.—A later report showed that there had been no relapse.[1]

2. A lad of fifteen has a swelling of tubercular origin on the right arm. It is four inches long, two inches wide, and one inch in thickness. Completely cured at Nancy in four months.[2]

3. I was able to observe a similar case in Geneva. A little girl aged 11, suffering from tuberculosis, was brought to me at the Jean Jacques Rousseau Institute in November, 1915. On the temple was a tubercular ulcer, the size of a florin. It dated from four months back, and had obstinately refused to heal under treatment. The child proved sensitive and confiding. Suggestion. Autosuggestion carried out by the patient conscien-

[1] Coué, op. cit., p. 23. [2] Privately communicated.

tiously every morning and every evening. Great was my astonishment, and equally great was the astonishment of my pupils, when the girl returned a week later with the ulcer already cicatrized. The epithelium covering the surface was still diaphanous, and pink in colour. A few weeks later the appearance was almost normal. Within a month from the date of the first suggestion the cough had completely disappeared, although the time was the middle of winter. Next month a slight bronchitis supervened, and was cured without difficulty. Appetite had become normal; sleep was uninterrupted, lasting from eleven to twelve hours. Rabinovitch, who has kept this case under observation, tells me that the improvement has continued, although the patient (whose family is in humble circumstances) lives in a damp ground-floor tenement and in hygienic conditions otherwise unfavourable.

4. In view of the results above recorded, it will not surprise the reader to learn that two cases of Pott's disease (tubercular curvature of the spine) have been benefited by treatment at Nancy.

III

Having dwelt on two classes of cases, uterine inflammation and tubercular disease respectively, let us now consider certain isolated examples which show how various are the disorders to which the method is applicable. The first case is quoted from Coué (op. cit., p. 23).

1. A. G., of Troyes, has for a long time suffered from an intractable enteritis. Mental condition bad. The patient is low-spirited, gloomy, and unsociable. He is much troubled with ideas of suicide.

Preliminary experiments easy; followed by sugges-

tion, the results of which were appreciable from the very first day. Suggestion practised for three months, daily at first, and subsequently at increasing intervals. At the end of this time the cure was complete, the enteritis having entirely disappeared, and the mental condition being all that could be desired. The cure dates from five years ago, and there has never been the slightest tendency to relapse. The patient is a conspicuous example of what can be done by suggestion, or rather by autosuggestion. The suggestions bore upon the mental condition as well as upon the physical, and both kinds were accepted with equal facility. Thus he acquired increasing self-confidence. Being an excellent workman, and wishing to earn more money, he wanted to have a hosiery frame in his own house, so that he might work at home for an employer. After a while, a manufacturer, who had seen him at work, entrusted him with the frame he coveted. G. was so skilful that he was able to turn out far more from his frame than other workmen were able to produce. Delighted with this result, the manufacturer entrusted him with another frame, and then with a third. Now G., who would have remained an ordinary workman but for suggestion, is the master of six frames, which bring him in quite a considerable income.

Within a few years (as I prophesied to him three years ago) G. will have become one of the leading manufacturers of Troyes.

2. A woman of Nancy had suffered for three years from an intractable eczema of the hands. Cure was effected by suggestion in a few sittings. (1914.)[1]

3. Jacqueline G., aged 7, of Neufchâteau (Vosges), where I was living in 1915, was brought to me by her

[1] Bulletin Ecole de Nancy, 1914.

mother on the advice of an elder brother who had been cured of stammering by autosuggestion.

The child had suffered from typhoid when 14 months old. Since then she had been totally deaf, and she was able to produce nothing but inarticulate sounds, comprehensible only to her habitual associates. The medical opinion was that there was no hope of cure, and it was proposed to send her to a special institution for the training of deaf-mutes. An idea of the intensity of the deafness may be derived from a picturesque phrase of her own, "I hear the piano with my feet," meaning that she could feel the tactile vibrations transmitted through the floor from the instrument, but could not hear any sound. Intelligent, full of vitality, and very sensitive to suggestion.

After six weeks' treatment, during which she had sittings twice a week, she was able to utter all the sounds of the alphabet. The only consonants she had any serious difficulty with were ch, j, s, and z. She learned several new words every day, fixing them in her memory by writing them down. She could sing, with the words, an air which had been sung before her with a pianoforte accompaniment.

It is well to point out that the child religiously formulated her daily autosuggestion. For this purpose she buried her head beneath the bedclothes, and would allow nothing and nobody to distract her attention.

4. B., sometime clerk of the civil court in Nancy. Has suffered for twenty-five years from an affection of the frontal sinuses; has had *eleven* operations, which have failed to cure. Physical condition deplorable; mental state even worse. Cannot read for ten minutes a day, is fatigued by the slightest movement, suffers

from insomnia, has severe and almost constant pain in the head, is incurably low-spirited. This patient came to consult Coué on the recommendation of R. de B. (see above, p. 273). The first four sittings seemed to have no effect. During the fifth sitting improvement was obvious, and became more conspicuous sitting after sitting. After three months the patient said to Coué: "I passed such a day yesterday as I have not known for years. I was entirely free from headache; I took a long walk without feeling the least bit tired; I was able to read without difficulty for four hours." He was cured. There was no relapse. (1915.)[1]

Enough cases have been enumerated to prove our point.[2]

As a rule, even when at the first sitting the subject has shown a satisfactory grasp of the mechanism of autosuggestion, we shall facilitate his progress by asking him to attend further sittings, twice a week at first, then once a week, and thenceforward once a fortnight or once a month for a time. As when swimming is being taught, the pupil must not be left to himself too soon.

Most people, in fact, are greatly influenced by what is said and thought by those with whom they associate. The arguments of routinists and professional sceptics end by shaking their nascent confidence, above all when these arguments are dinned into their ears day after day, or are presented in an elegant and logical form by a man who is cultivated though superficial. Those only who can think for themselves, those who do not estimate the truth of an idea by the number or the vivacity of the

[1] Privately communicated.

[2] A detailed register of cases is kept in the archives of the Jean Jacques Rousseau Institute at Geneva.

tongues that defend it—and such persons are rare—can readily dispense with lessons in suggestion. The others, the majority, will do well to steep themselves from time to time in the atmosphere of the sittings.[1]

Moreover, in the sitting, the ideas which form the object of suggestion are proposed to the subject without any effort on his part, for they are formulated by another. (Theoretically, a phonograph might do this as well as a living person.) All that the subject has to do is to watch the flow of ideas as he watches the succession of pictures on a screen; whereas in autosuggestion in the strict sense of the term the ideas must be initiated by the subject himself, and this requires at least a minimum of effort. At the outset, there is a risk that the subject will exaggerate the effort. When suggestion is induced by another, effort can be entirely relinquished, and it is therefore easier for the subject to realize the state of relaxation requisite for the working of autosuggestion. We know, indeed, that autosuggestion is fruitful precisely in proportion as it is distinguished from voluntary effort.

The number of sittings requisite for cure will obviously vary, in different subjects, and still more in different cases.

From this point of view, cases of peculiar interest are those in which *the morbid state is autosuggestive in origin and simulates a bodily disorder*. Here a counter-suggestion sometimes brings about immediate cure. Such a cure may even be regarded as a criterion on

[1] From this outlook, the reading of a manual may take the place of sittings. The author hopes that his book may serve such a purpose.

which we can base the assertion that the trouble was solely due to spontaneous autosuggestion, that there was no organic lesion whatever, that the whole thing was due to unconscious simulation. (See Part I, Chapter VIII, Conditional Suggestions; refer also to the example of subconscious teleology given in Part I, Chapter X.)

Here are examples of such immediate cures, where the countersuggestion has instantaneously neutralized the earlier autosuggestion.

1. A woman of Nancy, 80 years of age. For three years she had suffered from generalized pains which made it impossible for her to get about without the aid of two walking-sticks. She was able to leave the first sitting unassisted by these sticks, and she no longer uses them.[1]

2. Professor Gillet of Belfort suffered from aphonia. He could begin speaking in normal tones, but the aphonia invariably came on after he had spoken for ten or fifteen minutes. *Various doctors were consulted, and not one of them could discover any lesion in the vocal organs.* One of these advisers, however, said the patient was affected with "senility of the larynx," and this confirmed him in the notion that he would never recover. He came to Nancy during the vacation. A lady advised him to consult Coué. He refused for a time, but finally agreed to do so, notwithstanding his absolute unbelief in the effects of suggestion.

Coué made some suggestions to him none the less, and asked him to return two days later. When he kept the appointment, he said that on the previous day he had been able to converse for two hours without becoming

[1] Privately communicated.

affected with aphonia. On his next visit, four days from the first, there had been no return of the aphonia, although he had not only spoken freely in the interval, but had even sung. He was cured.

Since then Professor Gillet, freed from his simulated infirmity, has been able to continue his university career. He has become one of Coué's disciples. In the Bulletin Ecole de Nancy for the year 1913 he published a study of autosuggestion from which we had occasion to quote on p. 107.[1]

3. Louis Schmidt, aged 44, of Jézainville (Meurthe et Moselle), had an attack of indigestion, as a sequel of which he became affected with almost complete paralysis of the arms and legs. He was sent to the departmental infirmary, and remained there for a while without improvement. When he came to consult Coué, he could hardly walk; his legs, he said, were "like cotton-wool." After the first sitting, he could walk, and could even run. He had a relapse a few months later, but was restored to health once more by suggestive treatment.[2]

4. A soldier wounded in the war and invalided out of the army was unable, despite mecanotherapeutic treatment, to move his right leg except with the jerky impulsion of an artificial limb. Cure ensued upon the first suggestion.

Strange as are these cases of autosuggestive simulation which yield promptly to a countersuggestion, perhaps yet more remarkable are cases which appear precisely similar, cases in which, as in the former group, there is no trace of organic lesion, but which prove *more rebellious to suggestive treatment than do many cases that are*

[1] Gillet's own case is reported by Coué, op. cit., p. 26.

[2] Reported by Coué in the Bulletin for 1914.

indisputably of organic origin. Consider the following instance:

Miss M., aged 30, of Nancy, had suffered for six years from violent pains in the bladder. She had been treated by various methods, and had been subjected to an operation, with the result that she was informed by the surgeon *there was no organic lesion.* "It's all nerves!" he told her. "I can do nothing for you." Thereby he intensified the pernicious autosuggestion, and the patient grew worse. At length she sought Coué's advice. The suggestion he induced had to struggle with the antecedent suggestion, and it was a long time before the countersuggestion could get the upper hand. Progress followed each sitting, but the advance was almost imperceptible. So deep-rooted was the prior suggestion that *eight months* were requisite for the cure.[1]

This is not an isolated example. It appears, rather, to be typical of an important series. The question therefore arises, why these cases of autosuggestive simulation are sometimes perfectly easy to cure by a countersuggestion, and why the cure is sometimes so difficult. The difference between the two types is remarkable, and cannot fail to rivet the attention. The cause must doubtless be sought in the special characteristics of the antecedent spontaneous suggestion. As far as our knowledge goes (which is not very far), we may formulate the following hypothesis:

1. Sometimes the antecedent spontaneous suggestion is the outcome of a simple idea, one that is not ramified, one that is isolated in the mental mass. In that case the idea is as easy to eradicate as the "I cannot unclasp

[1] Privately communicated.

my fingers'' of the contracture experiments. A single countersuggestion is enough.

2. Sometimes, on the other hand, the spontaneous suggestion has struck roots in all directions; the threads of subconscious association spread throughout the mental mass; we are no longer confronted with a simple idea, but with what the psychoanalysts have termed a *complex,* an integration of images, memories, sentiments, conscious and unconscious reasonings, interlacing one with another, and to all appearance inextricably intertangled.

Upon psychoanalysis devolves the task of reconstituting these complexes, and consequently also the task of verifying the foregoing hypothesis. It may be added that when there has been *spontaneous suggestion by complex,* the indication is rather for psychoanalytic treatment than for simple suggestive treatment.

In exemplification of what has just been said, let me briefly recount the case of Miss B. M., aged 27, a case subjected to psychoanalysis. She suffered from quite a number of morbid symptoms, whose root cause was revealed by the analysis to be a scarcely acknowledged wish for a life spent in more comfortable circumstances, where she would have fuller opportunities for intellectual development. One of the symptoms was a severe neuralgia of the arm. Suggestion from me and autosuggestion on the patient's part led to its improvement, but not to its cure. I learned from the analysis that this symptom was due to subconscious imitation. In earlier days a schoolfellow of the patient, suffering from an accident affecting a paralyzed arm, had, owing to this accident and to the consequently enforced confinement to a couch, secured the leisure which enabled her to achieve

an intellectual development excelling that of her companions. From the day when this cause was explained to my patient, the neuralgia disappeared never to return.[1]

For cases in which the morbid symptoms are due to spontaneous suggestion by a simple idea, psychoanalytic treatment can never compete in rapidity of cure with suggestive treatment, for the latter, as we have seen, may give instant relief. But where the trouble is due to spontaneous suggestion by complex, psychoanalytic treatment, though tedious, may save time in the end, and may give more satisfactory results. If I may use the similitude, psychoanalytic treatment is to suggestive treatment what algebra is to arithmetic. It complicates simple problems, but it simplifies complex problems.

When therefore we have a *malady* probably due to autosuggestion, a malady which proves rebellious to treatment by the Nancy method although the *patient* is not in general refractory to that method, we should have recourse to psychoanalysis.

When, on the other hand, it is the *patient* who is refractory, when he finds it difficult to grasp the mechanism of autosuggestion, when he makes too much effort, when he proves unable to isolate himself and to concentrate satisfactorily, etc.—the indication is, with the subject's consent, to have recourse to *profound hypnosis* or induced sleep, which, according to the commonly received opinion, "increases suggestibility." But now, before dealing with the question of hypnosis, we must clear up the problem of suggestibility.

[1] This case was recorded by the author in the Archives de psychologie, December, 1916, Kündig, Geneva.

CHAPTER FIVE

ACCEPTIVITY AND SUGGESTIBILITY

Let us recall the definition of suggestion given in the Introduction to the present work.

In heterosuggestion, the only kind of suggestion usually considered, we recognized the presence of two phases:

1. An idea, imposed by the operator, is accepted by the subject.

2. This idea undergoes transformation within the subject into the corresponding reality.

According to the prevalent view, the essential phase of suggestion is the first of these two phases. It is upon this that the definition of suggestion must be based. But in our view the second is the essential phase. Suggestion, we contend, is not a phenomenon characterized by the movement of something from the operator to the subject. It is a psychophysiological phenomenon comprised within the mind of the subject. Thereon must be based our theory of autosuggestion.

Let us, therefore, distinguish the two following phases:

1. *Acceptation.*

2. *The ideoreflex process* (which, for us, is suggestion).

This distinction is vital, but writers on this subject

have failed, hitherto, to draw it with sufficient clearness. While they incline to one opinion or the other, to the view that suggestion is comprised in the former phase, or to the view that suggestion is comprised in the latter, they fail, as a rule, to differentiate accurately between the two outlooks. In practice they continue to regard suggestion as an integral and synthetic phenomenon, the product of two factors: an idea proposed by the operator, accepted by the subject, and realized by the latter. Their formula would run:

$$\text{suggestion} = \text{acceptation} + \text{ideoreflex process.}$$

What is *acceptation?*

We have already employed this term when speaking of suggestions proposed in the state of profound hypnosis (see Part III, Chapter I). We then caught a glimpse of the truth that acceptation must not be looked upon as an act of conscious and deliberate will. We can now go further than this. The term "acceptation" connotes the notion that the idea penetrates the mind in virtue of a consent which in other cases might be withheld; that the will and the intelligence are in abeyance; that the idea is not consciously controlled, but is the object of a spontaneous adhesion. In a word, *it is not the conscious but the subconscious which accepts.* The idea, instead of being confronted with others and judged from an intellectual and volitional viewpoint, is granted hospitality like a welcome stranger. It remains isolated, and therefore is not subject to contradiction.

We may speak of acceptation, not only in heterosuggestion, but also in spontaneous autosuggestion. In the latter, as well as in the former, an accepted idea is an

idea implanted in the mind without the exercise of any control.

Credulity, routine, indifference, confidence in the hypnotizer, the latter's "personal influence"—all these are factors of acceptation.

Now acceptation, by isolating the idea, by avoiding the establishment of associative and intellectual regulatory relationships between this idea and others, favours a concentration of the mind upon the accepted idea, and consequently favours suggestion. But acceptation is not itself suggestion, either wholly or in part.

The same confusion is met with when we pass from the question of suggestion to that of suggestibility.

By the suggestibility of any person, we mean the readiness with which, on the average, that person will realize a suggestion.

Thus, as the definition of suggestion varies, the definition of suggestibility will vary concomitantly. For most writers, suggestibility means the ease with which the subject realizes the ideas proposed by the operator. For us, on the other hand, suggestibility denotes the ease with which the second phase of the phenomenon ensues, whereas for the ease of acceptation we propose to use the term *acceptivity*.

The distinction becomes necessary for those who, like ourselves, take their stand upon autosuggestion. Let us consider reflective suggestion, which is our ideal. It presupposes that the ideas, the objects, of our suggestions, have been deliberately, intelligently, chosen; its primary function is to strive against harmful spontaneous suggestions, and to repair the damage these have caused. Far from implying the passive acceptation of

the ideas which pass through our minds, it exacts from us unceasing *self-control.* It insists that there shall be a strict frontier customs service, ever on the watch to prevent the ingress of undesirable ideas. To sum up, whereas acceptation, or the absence of control, is an adjuvant to heterosuggestion and spontaneous suggestion; on the other hand, non-acceptation, or control, is the primary condition for the practice of reflective autosuggestion. It is here that the confusion becomes serious.

Binet, faithful to his definition of suggestion, tends to identify suggestibility with what we have termed acceptivity. The experiments whereby he measures "suggestibility," serve rather to measure acceptivity, to measure mental passivity.[1]

Let us consider some of these experiments.

First Series (suggestion produced by the influence of a guiding idea).

Children are shown a drawing of twenty lines in series. The length of these lines increases up to the fifth, but the others are all of equal length. Having looked once at this drawing, they have to reproduce it from memory. Most of them draw the lines of increasing length beyond the fifth, and often up to the very end of the series.

Second Series (suggestion produced by personal influence).

Wools of various colours are shown to a child. When we are sure that it knows the names of all the colours, it has to write these names down. As it is writing, the name of some other colour is suggested, verbally. Often the child writes down this latter name.

[1] Binet, La suggestibilité, Paris, 1900; Giroud, La suggestibilité dans les enfants de l'école, Année psychologique, 1912.

The experiments of the first series bear upon spontaneous suggestion; those of the second series, upon induced suggestion. They can have no bearing on reflective suggestion, for in this the acceptivity would run counter to the suggestibility, and no confusion could possibly arise. Binet, however, appears to ignore reflective suggestion.

The kind of acceptivity shown in the experiments, which is for Binet suggestibility, obviously puts the subject in a worse position than if he were devoid of it. Binet, therefore, draws the following conclusion:

"If we point out to the children the mistake they have made, if we show them how they came to make it and where their attention lapsed, they simultaneously receive a lesson in things and a lesson in morals. The teaching is often profitable. In many instances, as test succeeds test, the pupils learn to avoid these errors, and become less suggestible."

We see at once how necessary it is that this mental passivity should no longer receive the name of suggestibility, since the latter term is likewise used to denote the faculty an idea has of realizing itself by a subconscious process within the mind of the subject.

Whereas, in the case of spontaneous and induced suggestion, the limits are by no means easy to determine (a fact which to some extent justifies the confusion), in the case of reflective suggestion, on the other hand, it is possible to isolate suggestibility.

By suitable exercises (the use of Chevreul's pendulum, Abramowsky's experiments,[1] etc.), we can measure this suggestibility while using the same principles as Binet. But the nature of the exercises must be entirely

[1] See Part II, Chapter VIII.

modified. Like Binet, we may denote an individual's average suggestibility by the fraction $\frac{1}{S}$. We then examine this person in various emotional states, in a condition of slight hypnosis, etc., measuring by the method of averages the influence of these different factors, denominated $f_1, f_2, f_3, \ldots f_n$. Thus the formula of suggestibility in the given circumstances would be:

$$S = \frac{f_1 \times f_2 \times f_3 \ldots \times f_n}{s}.$$

It would likewise be interesting to study the variations in suggestibility according to age and sex. Each age, for example, might have a mean coefficient of suggestibility $\frac{1}{\Sigma}$ which would be a standard of comparison for the individual suggestibility $\frac{1}{S}$.

Suggestibility, in the sense we give to the term, is unquestionably related to the sensitiveness and to the plasticity of the nervous system. In children suggestibility, like acceptivity, is unquestionably superior to the same faculty in the adult. But whereas acceptivity is a source of weakness, and must be combatted, suggestibility is a source of strength, and must be fostered. If there be a tendency for the *physical conditions* on which suggestibility depends to grow less favourable as age advances, we must, by special training (in collectedness, contention, and autohypnosis), encourage the *mental* conditions which will reinforce suggestibility. By cultivating this faculty, while endeavouring to combat acceptivity, we prepare the subject to carry out beneficial autosuggestions and to repress those that are of a noxious character.

So great is the power of words, that it suffices to give the same name to two things which are quite different and often opposed, to give the same name to acceptivity and suggestibility, for the discredit which justly attaches to the former to be unjustly transferred to the latter.

It is largely owing to this confusion that public opinion has as a rule taken exception to educative suggestion. Boirac, in his *Psychologie inconnu*,[1] tells us he would speak of the use of suggestion in mental orthopædics, "were it not that this particular order of applications, inaugurated in our days by Dr. Bérillon, still seems to be generally discountenanced."

In truth, suggestion should be utilized, not merely for the orthopædics of the mind, but likewise for the normal training of the mind. We shall return to this question at some length in Chapter VII. We are content, for the moment, to point out that the educationist, who must miss no chances, will turn to the best possible account even the acceptivity, the passivity, the mental plasticity if you will, which is at its maximum in the child.

He is aware that children readily accept ideas and transform them into suggestions. He will therefore be careful to suggest those ideas only that are healthy and beneficial. Nay more, as the young intelligence awakens, he will turn passivity to account in order to counteract passivity. He will strive more and more to make the child accept the idea, that no idea is to be accepted without reflection and without control. At the same time he will teach the child to make deliberate use of suggestion, to find the material of suggestion for itself. Having made the best possible use of the child's acceptivity, he

[1] Alcan, Paris, 1908. English translation by Dudley Wright, Psychic Science, Rider, London, 1918.

will proceed to bring about the progressive atrophy of the faculty. Having employed acceptivity to aid suggestibility, he will employ autosuggestion to destroy acceptivity. Thus acceptivity will have played the part of those clay moulds which are used for the casting of bronze statues.

CHAPTER SIX

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE THEORY OF HYPNOSIS

THE phenomena comprised under the general name of hypnosis present two aspects, physiological and psychological. In the actual state of our knowledge, a psychological description can be carried further than a physiological description. "The theories which are termed psychological," writes Claparède with perfect justice, "have the great advantage of permitting a far more detailed explanation, a closer and more systematic analysis. If, on the other hand, we attempt to use objective phraseology, when we have spoken of cortical inhibition, of the stagnation of neurocymes, and of the rupture of synapses, we have said practically all that there is to say. There are still too many gaps in our knowledge of the physiology of the brain. The attempt to reconstruct hypnosis in physiological concepts is perhaps to-day almost as chimerical as would be the attempt to reproduce the delicate traceries of the Louvre with the clumsy materials in a child's box of toy bricks. As for the eminent architects who have vainly essayed the first-named reconstruction, they must e'en console themselves with the reflection that their failure has been due to the circumstances of the case, and not to their own incapacity."[1]

Contemporary philosophy, breaking away from the

[1] Claparède et Baade, Recherches expérimentales sur quelques processus psychiques simples dans un cas d'hypnose, Kündig, Geneva, and Archives de psychologie, 1909.

traditions of Spinoza and Leibnitz, tends increasingly to invalidate the hypothesis of psychophysical parallelism. It would seem that we are hardly justified in saying that every physiological fact is expressible in psychological terminology, and conversely. Conceivably, of course, hypnosis is the outcome of purely physiological causes, which must be elucidated on the physiological plane. But in my own view, this does not hold good. I consider that the very production of hypnosis can be expounded in psychological terms (without prejudice to the concomitant physiological phenomena).

We have intentionally distinguished by the name of *hypnosis*,[1] states of somnolence which differ from ordinary drowsiness by their mode of production. We found, in fact, that the originator of these conditions was the immobilization of the attention, either by fixation (luminous point, noise of falling water, or by seesaw (lullaby, regular rhythm). From the difference in the mode of production of the condition there results a peculiar modification of the attention during the condition itself. To this modification we have given the name of *contention*. The slighter degrees of hypnosis, the only ones which have been hitherto described in the present work, are not followed by amnesia. They leave no gap in the consciousness, and the contention which characterizes them is a phenomenon of introspection—as anyone can perceive for himself. In this state, a minimum of effort suffices to retain an idea in the centre of mental vision; comparative mental immobility exists. Contention, as we have said, is a psychological equivalent of voluntary attention, minus effort.

[1] Part II, Chapter V.

Now, when the stimulus which has produced the hypnosis is prolonged, the somnolence grows deeper and deeper, and may culminate in sleep. This is *profound hypnosis* or *induced sleep*. The passage from somnolence to sleep is effected by insensible transitions. The difference between the two states is one of degree merely, not of kind.

1. Let us first consider the *production* of profound hypnosis. For this, practitioners are agreed in utilizing as a preliminary the immobilization of the attention. The commonest method is to direct the patient to fix his gaze on the practitioner's eyes or on some luminous point.

This sustained attention is no more than a means for the production of relaxation, which, as we have explained when speaking of slight hypnosis, is indispensable to the oncoming of sleep. Fatigue of the attention favours the relaxation, and this explains certain details in the technique of Braid, the founder of hypnotism. He writes: "A patient may be hypnotized by keeping the eyes fixed in *any* direction. It occurs most *slowly* and *feebly* when the eyes are directed straight forward, and most *rapidly* and *intensely* when they can be maintained in the position of a double internal and upward squint."[1]

Bérillon has realized that sustained attention is merely a means to an end, and that relaxation is the end. He

[1] James Braid, Neurypnology, Chapter II, Churchill, London, and Black, Edinburgh, 1843. The passage will be found on p. 115 of the most convenient work on Braid's life and writings, Waite, Braid on Hypnotism, Redway, London, 1899.

actually invites the subject to relaxation as soon as a certain degree of fatigue has resulted from the immobilization of the attention. He writes: "Instead of asking the subject, as previously, to fix his eyes on some point close at hand, I invite him to look straight in front of him, to look out into the infinite. My sole object in so doing is to secure complete relaxation from any accommodative effort. The subject's aspect soon shows that he has become utterly indifferent to everything that is going on around him. He is, therefore, in the state of uninterestedness favourable to sleep. The period of going-to-sleep is drawing to a close; sleep is imminent; and upon the slightest inducement, in obedience to the law of least effort, the subject's eyelids will close and he will fall asleep."[1]

Bernheim, who affirms that "suggestion is the key to all the problems of hypnosis," constructs a theory which is at once too simple and too systematic. He overlooks the indubitable rôle of immobilization of the attention. Nevertheless, his demonstration that suggestion can produce hypnosis unaided does not conflict with the foregoing observations, for suggestion presupposes the fixation of the attention on an idea; and consequently every suggestion, at the moment of formulation, is accompanied by an immobilization of the attention. The two actions supplement one another, fixation by an idea replaces fixation by a luminous point.

There is one form of induced sleep which does not presuppose the immobilization of the attention. When a subject is plunged into profound hypnosis, brought about by one of the ordinary methods, we may propose

[1] Bérillon, Théorie psychomécanique de l'hypnotisme. Revue de l'hypnotisme.

to him the following posthypnotic suggestion: "Every time that I touch your right shoulder," or "every time I show you a card on which is inscribed the word 'sleep' " (the precise formula is indifferent), "you will sleep as soundly as you are sleeping at this moment." These accesses of sleep due to posthypnotic suggestion will be the result of pure suggestion, without any antecedent immobilization of the attention. But we must not forget that the first sleep has been induced by one of the customary methods. The subject to whom we suggest, when he is asleep, that he will subsequently sleep in like manner, may perhaps reproduce by pure suggestion the immobilization of the attention which he has previously experienced.

Coué, who does not share Bernheim's exclusivism, accepts the existence of the two methods. We have just seen that if we set out from the immobilization of the attention as a principle, the two procedures are closely akin. Hence we must not be astonished at the likeness of the results. Coué notes the likeness without attempting to explain it. Here is his definition of hypnotic sleep:

"We may define it thus. Hypnotic sleep is sleep induced by an artificial cause (narcotic drugs excluded), such as the conscious or unconscious fixation of a more or less luminous object, or the use of suggestion or autosuggestion.

"Although the causes are different, the sleep appears to be the same in the two cases, and this sleep, though extremely restful, is in my opinion very different from ordinary sleep."[1]

[1] Coué, Le sommeil hypnotique et ses rapports avec la suggestion, Bulletin Ecole de Nancy, 1914.

2. What are the psychological *characters* of this peculiar sleep? If Coué affirms it to be "very different from ordinary sleep," this is not because he ignores the kinship between the two, a kinship which is far closer than most people imagine. But the first Nancy School was prone to dwell on the traits common to the two conditions, and it is therefore natural and justifiable that Coué should emphasize the differences.

From the days of Liébault onwards, the authorities of the first Nancy School followed by several other specialists and notably by Vogt and Forel, drawing attention to the likenesses, showed that, in general, both states facilitate suggestion; that catalepsy can be induced in natural sleep (Liébault); that the intellection of the words uttered by bystanders is not completely abolished during natural sleep. As an example of the last statement, it may be pointed out that one who snores will often stop snoring when told to do so.

Speaking generally, the authors who, with Bernheim, regard suggestion as the cause of hypnotic sleep, naturally tend to identify that condition with normal sleep. But, to consider the matter without prejudice, this identification must not be pushed to an extreme. Claparède, who has not committed himself to any theory of hypnotism, is an impartial judge. He writes:

"Let us make it perfectly clear *what* we are suggesting when we hypnotize. If we say to the patient, 'Sleep!' why does he not pass into ordinary slumber? Unless we agree that hypnosis is the same thing as normal sleep (and we have already refuted this hypothesis), the formula of 'suggested sleep' is insufficient to account for the phenomena. If we wish to maintain that hypnosis is due to suggestion, we have to admit that the very

fact of putting anyone to sleep by suggestion gives the sleep a peculiar character. The question then arises, *By what mechanism does this peculiar character originate?*"[1]

The question is pertinent. The present writer thinks he can provide the elements of an answer. Hypnosis *may* be due to suggestion, but the very fact of suggestion presupposes the immobilization of the attention, an immobilization which is therefore common to all the methods for producing hypnosis, and wherein will be found the real reason for the peculiar characteristics of this condition.

Profound hypnosis exhibits in an intensified form the distinctive traits of slight hypnosis, in which the subject experiences a sense of vacancy, of mental immobility, giving rise to *contention*. Now we think we have been able to explain these characters as the outcome of the preliminary immobilization of the attention (Part II, Chapter V). The same cause is present here, but it is intensified. The idea of mental immobility,[2] as happens with any idea that is in the mind when sleep begins, dominates the whole of the sleep. The subject inevitably accepts a suggestion of mental immobility, and this suffices to explain the chief psychological differences between hypnotic sleep and normal sleep.

[1] Claparède, Interprétation psychologique de l'hypnose, reprinted from the Journal für Psychologie und Neurologie, Barth, Leipzig.

[2] Cf. Carl Picht, Hypnose, Suggestion und Erziehung, Klinkhardt, Leipzig, 1913. According to Picht, hypnotic sleep differs from ordinary sleep in this respect, that the former is the outcome of a concentration, whereas the latter is the outcome of a dispersion, of the attention.

Can we prove the existence, during profound hypnosis, of this (comparative) mental immobility, of the sensation of mental vacancy which accompanies it, and of the contention which is their result?

"It is generally agreed," writes Claparède, "that concentration of the attention exists during hypnosis. But I am not aware that any experiments have hitherto been undertaken for the verification of this hypothesis, and in order to ascertain the precise nature of the modification of the attention."[1]

Claparède has himself organized a series of experiments to explore the psychology of the hypnotized subject. His results, considered by themselves, do not seem to furnish an answer to the foregoing question. But when we juxtapose them with what introspection reveals concerning contention, they seem to throw much light on the matter, and to justify our hypothesis.

Here are the leading results, as far as they bear on the problem:

a. "Hypnosis tends to slacken associative reactions. . . . We must note, however, that while this is true on the average, certain associative acts may take place under hypnosis just as rapidly as in the waking state. This shows that the inhibitory theory is inadequate. Whilst associative inhibition is favoured by the state of hypnosis, it does not constitute that state. . . .

b. "If we examine Madame Bul's associative activity, not when she is performing an experiment, but when she is left to her own devices, what do we note? Absolute passivity. . . . Left to herself, Madame Bul says 'My mind is a blank'; she is indifferent to everything.

[1] Interprétation psychologique de l'hypnose.

She seems to have lost that constant concern about the present moment and the moment which is just coming, that concern which is the mainspring of all our actions and all our thoughts.[1]

"In Madame Bul, at any rate, the hypnotic state was essentially characterized by *a suspension of the function of initiative.* This conclusion has been drawn by other observers. We have seen that several authors, and Wundt in especial, characterize hypnosis by the suspension of voluntary activity.

c. "The power of adding numbers together is not during hypnosis appreciably different from the same subject's power during the waking state."[2]

"What are termed the *intellectual* faculties seem to be little if at all affected."[3]

The juxtaposition of these observations is most instructive. We learn from it that two apparently contradictory phenomena are present in hypnosis:

1. Voluntary activity is suspended.

2. What are termed the intellectual faculties appear to be little if at all affected.

This seems very remarkable. *The use of the intellectual faculties normally presupposes the working of voluntary attention; now here voluntary activity is suspended, and yet the intellectual faculties are none the worse.* But the apparent contradiction disappears if we admit that hypnosis is characterized by a modification of the attention,

[1] Cf. Beaunis: "When we ask a hypnotized subject, as I have often done, 'What are you thinking about?' the almost invariable answer is, 'Nothing.'—We have here a veritable condition of inertia, or rather one of intellectual repose."

[2] Claparède and Baade, op. cit.

[3] Claparède, Interprétation psychologique de l'hypnose.

namely, contention, which is *the psychological equivalent of voluntary attention, minus effort.*[1]

Furthermore, we have just seen that, according to the hypnotized subject's own statements, profound hypnosis is characterized by a sensation of mental vacancy.

We have thus verified the hypothesis that there is no essential difference between profound hypnosis and what we have termed slight hypnosis. We are therefore justified in applying the term hypnosis to both conditions.

One point may still seem obscure. The foregoing explanation appears to ignore one of the essential characteristics of classical hypnotism, namely, the rapport between the operator and the hypnotized subject, so that the subject, despite his sleep, understands the words of the operator.

This rapport presupposes that there shall be an operator. But hypnosis, as described in this book, does not necessarily require a hypnotizer. When I put myself to sleep by autosuggestion, by voluntary autohypnosis, or when I am sent to sleep by a soothing rhythm, there is hypnosis, but there is no hypnotizer.

In hypnosis of the classical type there is a hypnotizer, and throughout the hypnotic sleep the subject's mind is obsessed by the personality of this hypnotizer. If we recall the law that sleep is dominated by the obsessive idea or ideas which were in the mind at the moment of

[1] From the physiological standpoint, catalepsy is a pendant to contention, although it is a less constant character of hypnosis. We might say that *contention is a catalepsy of the attention.* In contention, the muscles of attention do their work without effort.

going to sleep, we shall realize that this obsessive presence of the hypnotizer may serve to explain the maintenance of communication between hypnotizer and subject. When we fall asleep pondering an unsolved problem, we give free rein during sleep to all the ideas which are more or less intimately connected with the problem, and without the facility given to the flow of these ideas the solution of the problem during sleep would be impossible. In like manner, during profound induced hypnosis, the subject's mind remains open to everything connected with the hypnotizer, and to his voice in especial. The mother who goes to sleep with her thoughts full of her child, and who wakens at the child's least cry, furnishes us with an example which is not essentially different from that of the hypnotized subject recognizing the voice of the practitioner.

In a word, the fundamental characteristic of hypnosis is a peculiar modification of attention, i. e. what we have named *contention.*

If hypnosis increases suggestibility, this may be dependent on various features of hypnosis (features which are in part common to hypnosis and to ordinary sleep); but for the most part it is due to contention, which annuls voluntary effort, a condition unfavourable to suggestion, while maintaining attention, a condition above all others indispensable to suggestion.

As for the apparent contradictions pointed out in Part III, Chapter I, where it was shown that suggestibility seems now increased now diminished by hypnosis, these contradictions vanish, so I believe, as soon as acceptivity is carefully distinguished from suggestibility properly so called. (See the preceding chapter.)

We have to admit that, as a rule, and probably in all cases, hypnosis is characterized by increased suggestibility. But it is not necessarily characterized by increased acceptivity.

Having learned the nature and the true significance of profound hypnosis, it remains to ask what are the best ways of inducing the condition. We wish to induce it easily, and we wish it to be fruitful when induced.

1. When we speak of the immobilization of the attention, our language is extremely abstract. There is not only one kind of attention. There are visual attention, auditory attention, mental attention, etc. A completer result will be obtained if we can immobilize them all simultaneously. (By occupying one, we tend to quiet the others, and may thus bring about a sufficient degree of immobilization.) We may engage the various forms of attention at one and the same time, appealing to sight by a luminous point, to hearing by a soothing and monotonous voice, to touch by rhythmic passes, and to the mind by the idea of sleep. Let us ignore the question whether the passes, over and above their effect upon the attention, have the peculiar physical action ascribed to them by the magnetizers.

2. The suggestions we have to propose will be more likely to be efficacious if we employ methods tending to establish a close rapport between operator and subject. Such methods are those which tend to make the operator's presence a positive obsession for the subject. For instance, we shall appeal to sight with a luminous object, and the best will be for this object to be held by the hypnotizer, who will impress upon it a rhythmic movement. The voice, and passes, are additional means for

emphasizing the hypnotizer's personality. In his ordinary practice, Coué uses methods which satisfy these requirements. Here is his own account of them.

"You move a luminous object to and fro before the subject's eyes, requesting him to follow this object with his eyes, but without turning his head. Meanwhile you make to him the following suggestions: 'Think well that you are going to sleep; as you follow the moving object with your eyes, you feel a lethargy stealing over you; your arms, your legs, become heavy; your whole frame grows heavy; your eyelids are heavy, they grow heavier and heavier, they are like lead, you find it more and more difficult to keep your eyes open. Your sight is becoming obscured, your eyes are watering, you can hardly distinguish anything in the room, sleep begins to overpower you. I shall slowly count up to twenty. As I count, the longing to sleep will steadily increase. Before I reach twenty, your eyes will close and you will be sound asleep.'

"In most cases, everything happens exactly as you have said; and by the time you pronounce twenty, the subject is asleep. If his eyes are not yet closed, say to him in a commanding tone, 'Shut your eyes! Sleep!' and he instantly closes his eyes and goes to sleep.

"To make the sleep more profound you say: 'Now you are asleep, sound asleep, and as I tell you that you are sound asleep, you do in fact feel that your slumber becomes deep, very deep, deeper than it has ever been before.' This word 'deep,' repeated in such a fashion, acts on the subject's mind like the drops of water which in the end hollow out the stone."[1]

[1] Coué, Le sommeil hypnotique et ses rapports avec la suggestion.

But in general, as we have said, the Nancy method does not involve the induction of profound hypnosis. This latter condition would seem to be chiefly valuable in cases where the subject is maladroit in the use of auto-suggestion, above all when he cannot learn to avoid making efforts of the will. Profound hypnosis suspends the voluntary activity which is impairing the chances of success.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUGGESTION IN THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN[1]

SUGGESTION is a psychophysiological function which exists in everyone. It can therefore be trained in everyone. No reader who has carefully followed the exposition of data and reasoning throughout the preceding pages can fail to understand how baseless are all the objections that have been made to the use of suggestive methods in the education of children. Induced suggestion is not a violation of the subject's individuality; it is a means of training the subject's powers of autosuggestion. Moreover, only in connection with profound hypnosis could the idea of such a violation being effected possibly arise. Now, we have seen that for the adult the

[1] There have been precursors in this field of educative suggestion. I may mention the following:

J. M. Guyau, Education et Hérédité, Paris, 1889 (English translation, Education and Heredity, Walter Scott, London, 1891), seems to have inaugurated the idea.

Walter Rose, Die hypnotische Erziehung der Kinder, Berlin, 1898, refers to suggestion for the inhibition of instincts such as cleptomania and lying. (He looks upon the latter as instinctive and as hereditarily transmitted in modern society.) He speaks also of the development of new instincts by suggestion.

The scholastic outlook in especial is voiced by two writers in the Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Pädagogik. Horn contributes, Suggestion als pädagogischer Faktor, neue Bahnen (Heft 5, 1900). Rausch contributes, Die Suggestion im Dienste der Schule (Heft 4, 1901).

Carl Picht champions the views of Guyau and Rose. See his Hypnose, Suggestion und Erziehung, Klinkhardt, Leipzig, 1913.

use of profound hypnosis is as a rule a subsidiary method. Still more is this true of children, whose suggestibility in the waking state is so extensive. Their high suggestibility is a reason for beginning the training of autosuggestion in early childhood.

This training, far from reducing the subject's energy, seems, in virtue of its peculiar mechanism, to enhance that energy; and it does so in the absence of any suggestions of a directly energizing character. Besides, not merely would it be a mistake to attempt to shield the child from all suggestive influences. The thing is an impossibility. If suggestive action be not exercised methodically, it will be exerted by chance, in the form of the countless spontaneous suggestions which daily life presents to the child's mind. When we take this suggestive action under our own guidance, we can ensure that it will be beneficent. When, on the other hand, we leave it to itself, it gives rise indifferently to good and to bad results, and it may eventuate in disaster.

Unreservedly, therefore, I agree with Herbert Parkyn's contention that the deliberate practice of autosuggestion should be taught to children in all our schools.

I would go further, and would say that autosuggestion ought to take a primary place in education. For by its use, not merely will the child learn self-control, not merely will he develop his physical energies and be helped to resist disease, but in addition he will be able to develop (in a degree hardly conceivable by those who have not seen the method applied) his working powers in all fields. He will learn how to obtain the maximum of results with a minimum of effort; he will acquire a method which will be a standby to him throughout life. In the intellectual sphere he will develop all his faculties,

and memory and attention above all. In especial he will learn to *like* his work. Furthermore, by suggestion, we are able to strive advantageously against the bad inclinations and other defects of childhood, most of which are indeed themselves to a greater or less degree the outcome of antecedent suggestions. It follows from these considerations that the suggestive method cannot properly be regarded as merely a minor weapon in the pedagogical armamentarium. It can be made the auxiliary of all training and of all instruction. To anyone who has practised educative suggestion, pedagogical treaties which systematically ignore this discipline seem built upon shifting sand. In such conditions, the dispute between the various complicated methods which claim to develop memory, attention, and interest, in children, resembles nothing so much as an interminable argument among persons in a hurry as to which is the quickest footpath, while they pay no attention to the railroad close at hand, to the train which could take them where they want to go in a tenth part of the time.

Doubtless when we are concerned with educating a child's tendencies, we must respect, as far as they are wholesome, all the most spontaneous tendencies he displays, all those which are a sign of his aptitudes and of his very nature. Here suggestion must be cautiously used. But many of the tastes, many of the tendencies, which seem natural to the child, are simply the outcome of spontaneous suggestions. Children's games, far from being in every case an expression of the child's deeper nature, are often purely imitative. As I had occasion to point out in an earlier chapter (Part I, Chapter VI), the same statement applies to young people's choice of a profession. In many cases, therefore, the rôle of sug-

gestion should be to eradicate the factitious tastes and tendencies of childhood. We shall be able to safeguard this practice by careful observation. Psychoanalysis, for example, is competent to reveal the genuinely original tendencies, and we shall respect these in so far as they are not harmful to the child, or do not promise to be harmful to it when it grows up.

The method of training suggestion which has been described in this book is applicable to children, but may be simplified in view of the great suggestibility of youthful subjects. The exercises with Chevreul's pendulum are especially useful for children. They may be modified by making them into a game. For instance, the bob of the pendulum may take the form of a bird which has to peck a piece of bread, or of a cat chasing a mouse, and so on. We can organize competitions. But in their simplest form, the exercises will be found sufficiently interesting to the great majority of children.

Quite apart from exercises, quite apart from any procedure which recalls therapeutic suggestion, it is possible, in large measure, to guide the suggestions that act on a child's mind. Thanks to a child's acceptivity, ideas which are frequently brought to its notice, ideas uttered by parents, teachers, and others in whom it has confidence, readily become implanted, and initiate suggestions. Consequently, when we are with children, we must scrupulously avoid doing and saying things which will initiate harmful suggestions. On the other hand, we should frequently repeat the ideas which are likely to be the starting-point of beneficial suggestions.

Guyau judiciously remarks[1] that it is extremely foolish, when a child has done wrong, to express our censure

[1] Op. cit.

in the form of a generalization such as, "What a greedy boy you are; what a liar; what a naughty child." So doing, we tend to determine the future. The child thus characterized looks upon itself as a glutton, as a born liar, and so on, and acts accordingly. It is far better policy to show great surprise that so good a child, one habitually truthful, etc., could have to-day made you believe that it was a liar, when you know perfectly well that it is nothing of the kind.[1]

A woman teacher in Geneva, who has attended my lectures at the Jean Jacques Rousseau Institute, practises on her pupils the following ingenious method of indirect suggestion. Every Monday, when the week's work begins, she writes on the blackboard the "resolution of the week." In a brief phrase this summarizes and aims at correcting some fault in conduct or in methods of work which has been epidemic during the previous week. The children copy the formula, and collectively take the good resolution. The results have been gratifying. I may add that this teacher, having grasped the significance of the law of reversed effort, has substituted for the formula first used, *I want to be* this or that, the formula, *I shall be* this or that. The effects of this substitution have been obvious.

From the earliest years of childhood, and unceasingly thereafter, we should, in word and deed, watch over the suggestions made to the child mind, and above all should

[1] Cf. Froebel: "We have to recognize that in many cases the teacher has himself made the child ill-conducted and vicious by attributing to it a bad intention in the committing of actions which were indeed regrettable, but which the child performed without realizing their true bearing, performed through lack of foresight, through heedlessness, or through want of judgment."

we be careful to avoid making any harmful suggestions. American manuals contain excellent observations on this subject. For instance, Herbert Parkyn writes:

"As a rule, parents pay little attention to the nurses they employ to look after their children. They employ Mary or Jane because she seems kind-hearted and can be hired cheap because ignorant—too ignorant, as a rule, to fill positions in which more money can be earned.

" Kindness is not all that is required to make a good nurse for a child; and if parents could fully realize a nurse's influence on their children they would employ only a speaker of good English, a woman with charming manners and good principles—a woman, in fact, who possesses the qualities they would like to see developed in their children. A nurse of this kind is cheap at any price. I venture to say that the time is not far distant when there will be regular training schools established for nurses for children, and that these nurses when properly qualified will draw larger salaries than the trained nurses from our hospitals. When this time comes, the training of the children who are to be candidates, subsequently, for the presidency of the republic, will not be left to ignorant Mary or Jane. If a nurse is to be employed at all, it will be a nurse who can give the child the best influences during the time he is receiving his first suggestions—the most impressionable time of a man's whole life.

"Not long ago I was riding in the same railway coach with a mother and her little girl. The child was sitting in the seat opposite to her mother, riding with her back towards the engine. Suddenly the mother said to her:

" 'Charlotte, come here and sit beside me. It will make you sick if you ride backward,'

"A suggestion like this placed in the mind of a child is sufficient to influence her the rest of her life while riding in any class of vehicle. It will do a great deal to spoil her enjoyment of travelling, because she will fuss over securing a seat facing the direction in which she is travelling, and if she be forced by circumstances to ride backward, the autosuggestion arising from the old suggestion given by the mother will be sufficient to make her miserable if not actually sick.

"There is no reason on earth why a person should not ride backward as comfortably as any other way. Still, I have seen women standing in a street car refuse to accept a seat offered them, the excuse being:

" 'Thank you! I prefer to stand. It makes me sick to ride backward.'

"Poor things, they are made miserable by a common superstition or a suggestion given to them in childhood!

"I have selected this illustration because the superstition or belief is a very common one, but there are thousands of similar absurdities prevalent among the masses to make life fussy or unhappy.

"Let us arise, then, and see what we can do by new autosuggestions to stamp out the old absurd notions, first in ourselves, and then, by precept and practice, endeavour to assist our fellow men to free themselves from their self-imposed burdens."[1]

Where health is concerned, we cannot be too careful about children, both as to what we say in their presence, and as to what we allow them to see. Not merely must we spare children the sight of illnesses which would impress their imagination; but before children even more than before adults we must scrupulously avoid

[1] Op. cit., pp. 47-9.

speaking of illness. We must shun the small change of conversation in which, when we have exhausted the subject of the weather, we pass on to speak of health, that is to say of disease. I mean the sort of talk wherein, having reviewed the headaches, the constipations, the nose-bleedings, and the toothaches, of our own interesting personality, we proceed to discuss the rheumatisms, the chronic bronchitis, and the stitches of our uncles and aunts, our male and female cousins, down to the twenty-fifth degree of family relationship. Next comes the list of sudden deaths or rapidly fatal illnesses in our own street and our own quarter of the town. And we finish off with philosophical conclusions in the style of Joseph Prudhomme and Monsieur Perrichon anent our mortal frailty and the numberless enemies ever on the watch for a chance of destroying our precious health.

A reasonable code of good manners would forbid as a piece of rudeness the asking of people how they are; and still more the replying to such a question by saying that we don't feel at all well, and insisting on the fact with unction. Conversations of the type just described do harm to those who talk in this way; but, after all, that is their own affair. It is, however, a serious matter, when people speak freely of illness in the presence of children who are all eyes and ears to absorb what they see and hear.

Everything which tends to make illness impressive—the solemn medical attendant who comes in a tall hat, the solemn medicines in variously coloured phials, and the like—all such pomp and circumstance should be removed as far as possible from the sight and hearing of children. It is equally important that we should hide from a child any anxiety we may feel as to the condition

of its own health. These precepts are elementary for anyone who understands the suggestibility of the youthful mind. Let me quote once more from another American writer:

"One reason why we have such poor health is because we have been steeped in poor-health thought from infancy. We have been saturated with the idea that pain, physical suffering, and disease are a part of life; necessary evils which cannot be avoided. We have had it so instilled into us that robust health is the exception and could not be expected to be the rule, that we have come to accept this unfortunate condition of things as a sort of fate from which we cannot get away.

"The child hears so much sick talk, is cautioned so much about the dangers of catching all sorts of diseases, that he grows up with the conviction that physical discords, aches, pains, all discomfort and suffering, are a necessary part of his existence, that at any time disease is liable to overtake him and ruin his happiness and thwart his career.

"Think of what the opposite training would do for the child; if he were taught that health is the everlasting fact and that disease is but the manifestation of the absence of harmony! Think what it would mean to him if he were trained to believe that abounding health, rich, full, complete, instead of sickness, that certainty instead of uncertainty, were his birthright! Think what it would mean for him to *expect* this during all his growing years, instead of building into his consciousness the opposite, instead of being saturated with the sick thought and constantly being cautioned against disease and the danger of contracting it!"[1]

[1] O. S. Marden, op. cit., pp. 255-6.

But in that case, it may be objected, we should have to be ever on the watch lest we should influence for evil the children by whom we are surrounded. Despite the best will in the world, we shall err in this respect a hundred times a day.

Certainly we must avoid undue exaggeration concerning these inevitable errors. But for the very reason that such blunders will often elude our most watchful attention, it will be well to apply to children the methods of suggestive therapeutics. By speech, gesture, and example, we may often give them good suggestions; but we shall not fail, from time to time, to give them bad ones in addition. The rôle of methodical suggestion will be to reinforce the former and to neutralize the latter.

In addition to the methods above described, there is one which is peculiarly suitable for children. It makes use of natural sleep, when the subconscious remains awake, just as it remains awake in induced sleep. Coué recommends parents to proceed as follows:

"As soon as the child has gone to sleep, one of the parents goes very quietly into the bedroom and up to the bed. A hand is slowly and gently laid on the child's forehead. Should the child stir, and seem about to wake up, the parent says in a low tone, 'Sleep, go on sleeping, sleep soundly,' repeating the phrases until the child is sound asleep once more. Then the parent, still in the same slow and quiet tones, reiterates all the improvements desirable in the child, whether from the point of view of health, sleep, work, application, conduct, or the like. When this has been done, the parent withdraws, still taking the utmost care not to wake the child."[1]

[1] Op. cit., p. 26.

I should point out that, to be really fruitful, this simple method should be put in practice every evening without exception. Coué is in the habit of saying that a child should have suggestion every day, just as every day it has a cup of milk or a cup of cocoa for breakfast. The parents should make it part of their routine. In such conditions, the results are sometimes so remarkable that parents to whom I have advised the procedure have at the end of a few weeks told me that they were positively "alarmed" by the marvels that had ensued. I may add that if the parents set to work awkwardly at first, no great harm will result, since suggestion can undo whatever suggestion has done. Should an error be made, it will be easy to correct it.

CHAPTER EIGHT

GENERAL METHODS OF APPLICATION

INDUCED suggestion, as described in this work, is susceptible of very wide applications. It is upon these that we wish to insist in conclusion.

1. From the point of view of the *operators,* it can be generalized in this sense, that the method can be entrusted to practically everyone.

This is possible, in the first place, because it is free from the dangers so frequently ascribed to it. In essence, it is in no respect the taking possession of one individuality by another. The practitioner is not a master who issues orders, but a guide who makes proposals. Moreover, only in connection with induced sleep could there be any reason to dread that such a state of dependence might arise; but we have learned that, in the great majority of instances, induced sleep is superfluous. Again, dependence is not even one of the characteristics of the special state we are considering, for obedience to the practitioner's orders, far from being always increased, is not infrequently diminished. When dependence ensues, it would appear to arise solely out of autosuggestion, as when the subject is afraid that it will arise. Herein we find an additional reason for generalizing the practice and the theory of autosuggestion, to the end that a knowledge of the practice may be widely diffused, in order to destroy superstitions concerning

hypnotism and its dangers—superstitions upon which such dangers as exist do actually depend.

Yet another reason for generalizing the practice of induced suggestion is the simplicity of the method. The only requisites are the performance of a few elementary exercises, a moment of muscular and mental relaxation, in conjunction with perseverance and regularity. Thus without having recourse to the classical methods of hypnotic suggestion, we obtain results more remarkable than those secured by earlier hypnotists. So simple is the procedure, that few can fail to master it. For the rest, it will not bear its full fruit unless we consider it as a training of the subject's power of autosuggestion. The practitioner's ideal must be that of every genuine teacher, which is to render the pupil capable in the end of doing without a teacher. Herein we see a further motive for rejecting the hypothesis that induced suggestion, as we advocate it, involves social dangers. If we admit that unconscientious suggesters may avail themselves of a method which tends to enslave their subjects, not to liberate them, such suggesters will not secure the results derivable from the method described in the present work, seeing that one of the essential principles of our method is to make the subject understand the mechanism of autosuggestion, to give the pupil the key. It is above all on this account that the method is so successful, and is able to furnish results far superior to those of methods based on heterosuggestion. Nor need this surprise us. Persons who appeal to autosuggestion display a fuller knowledge of the peculiarities of the mind, and it is by understanding and applying the laws of nature that we can obtain the best results. Inevitably in such cases there is a struggle for existence between

the rival methods. That which produces the best results will survive.

When induced suggestion, as above described, has to be employed for the relief of some physical ailment, the method is available to all. There is nothing distinctively medical about it, and there is no reason why it should remain a monopoly of medical practitioners. It can be used by all parents and by all educationists for the benefit of their children and their pupils. Its use does not require specialized knowledge of medicine. This follows from the law of subconscious teleology. We have merely to suggest the idea of cure, and the subconscious makes it its business to discover the physiological means for realizing the cure, without either the operator or the subject requiring to know what these means are.

2. Turning to the outlook of the *subjects*, we may say that for them also the method can be generalized; with the exception of a small percentage of abnormal individuals, it is suitable for everyone's use. It is applicable to all persons and to all ages. No temperament will prove permanently refractory. There are none in whom suggestion is peculiarly liable to induce unfavourable results.

3. Turning, finally, to consider the *cases* suitable for suggestive treatment, the possibilities of wide application are no less obvious. Bernheim drew a line between functional and organic maladies, but for us the limits of suitable cases have been greatly extended. Great numbers of organic affections, even those which physical methods of treatment have failed to relieve, have yielded to the power of suggestion. In the present state of our knowledge it is impossible to say what are the limits of that power. The remarkable results secured in recent

years have completely upset the ideas formerly entertained, and we have a right to expect yet further advances. The inference is that suggestion may be tried and ought to be tried in every case.

Nay more. We are justified in affirming that suggestive treatment will at least give some relief in every case in which the patient remains conscious. Let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that there is some organic illness in which suggestion is absolutely powerless. If the patient's mind be dominated by the idea that he is suffering from such an illness, there will inevitably ensue (above all if the illness be attended by pain) a spontaneous suggestion which will aggravate the morbid state. Attention, mingled with emotion, returns despite itself to the idea of illness, in everyone who knows himself to be ill, and still more in anyone who actually feels himself to be ill. Suggestion is an inevitable sequel. The consequence is that in every actual case of illness there are two elements, a primary element which is the direct issue of the malady, and a secondary element which is the outcome of autosuggestion. Now if, by hypothesis, the primary element be rebellious to suggestive treatment, the secondary element cannot fail to be amenable to suggestive treatment. Hence suggestive treatment will bring relief in all cases.

We may add that even in cases for which the use of physical methods of treatment is regarded as indispensable or advantageous, there will still be plenty of scope for suggestive treatment as an auxiliary. Suggestion can make it easier for the patient to take distasteful medicines; it can help to overcome the undesirable effects of certain drugs; it can be used to induce anæsthesia when painful manipulations and operations are necessary.

I do not wish to advise every doctor to make a systematic use of direct suggestion. When a medical adviser proposes the use of suggestion, the patient may accept the method with very little confidence in the result. On the other hand, when a patient spontaneously applies to a specialist in suggestion, he probably does so, in the great majority of instances, because at bottom he expects satisfactory results. In such conditions the soil is favourable, and there is a much better chance of complete success. The patient consulting a doctor who does not usually practise as a suggester, expects a prescription, and ipso facto has some confidence in this prescription. The doctor must take advantage of such a state of mind, and must use the prescription as the vehicle for indirect suggestion. Coué, with his customary psychological acumen, explains the matter as follows:

"If a doctor, after examining his patient, writes a prescription and hands it over without comment, the drugs thus ordered are not likely to do much good. But when the practitioner explains that this medicine or that must be taken in such or such conditions and it will produce such or such effects, the results thus described will rarely fail to occur. . . . In my opinion, whenever a patient consults a doctor, the latter should always order some drug or other, even if drugs should not be really indicated. For the ordinary patient goes to see a doctor in the expectation that the doctor will prescribe a drug which will cure. Only in exceptional cases does the patient know that hygienic measures are of the first importance, that he will be cured by following a regimen. These seem to him trifling matters. What he wants is a bottle of medicine.

"Should the doctor merely prescribe a regimen and

fail to order any medicine, the patient is likely to be discontented. He will be apt to say to himself that since he has not been given any medicine he has wasted his time. Very often he will seek other advice. I consider, therefore, that the doctor should always prescribe some medicine for his patient. He should avoid ordering advertised specifics, whose chief value is derived from the very fact of wide advertisement. He should write his own prescriptions, for the patient will have far more confidence in these than in X's pills or Y's powders, which can be bought from any druggist without a prescription."[1]

In this manner suggestion can be methodically employed without the patient being aware of the fact. A knowledge of the methods of indirect suggestion is invaluable to educationists and to parents no less than to medical practitioners. We may add that in these cases we depend less upon knowledge than upon tact and upon psychological insight.

[1] Op. cit., pp. 18 and 19.

CONCLUSION

SUGGESTION AND THE WILL

SUGGESTION, therefore, is nothing more than autosuggestion. It is an active process which goes on in the interior of the individual, and whose starting-point is an idea. If we consider these characters alone, we may be inclined to confound suggestion with the will. But whereas a voluntary act is one of which consciousness is aware, the mechanism of a suggested act remains essentially subconscious. With this difference in character there is associated a practical difference. Suggestion (autosuggestion) does not bear its full fruit except on condition that it be not confounded with the will.

In the psychology of the schools it is customary to distinguish three types of mental activity: instinct, habit, and the will. Suggestion is not reducible to any of these categories. It is an activity sui generis, and must henceforward be allotted its place in psychology side by side with the other three. Neither theoretically nor practically is it less important than these.

Suggestion enables us to control something within our organism which is independent of the action of the will, something to which we can never hope to issue direct commands. We thus reacquire a privilege which, according to Delbœuf,[1] we originally possessed in an earlier

[1] Delbœuf, De l'origine des effets curatifs de l'hypnotisme, Bulletin Académie Royale de Belgique, 1887.

stage of evolution. In those days the living being was fully aware of all that went on within. Owing to division of labour, its attention was increasingly directed outwards, and the supervision of the inner world was left to the subconscious. However this may be, suggestion seems to reëstablish the supervision, to reconquer a realm lost in the course of evolution, and to reconquer it without any detriment to subsequent gains. For whereas the will has no power to promote the development of suggestion, this latter, opening a path to the very centre of our being, can act on all our functions and all our faculties, and can promote the development of the will itself.

Suggestion, like the will, is a mode of activity dominated by a teleological principle; it represents a continuous adaptation of means to the attainment of a desired end. We can indicate the kinship between the will and suggestion and can simultaneously emphasize the difference between the two by saying that the teleology of the will is conscious whereas the teleology of suggestion is subconscious.[1]

The trend of contemporary psychology is to seek in the mind, at a lower level than that occupied by the fully conscious faculties, other forms of mental life which are deeper and less conspicuous.

In this respect, two contemporary movements are peculiarly significant.

[1] Instinct likewise works towards an end. But instinct, according to Hartmann's definition, is the conscious means for an unconscious (subconscious) end. Suggestion, on the other hand, is the subconscious means for a conscious end. The contrast is stated in general terms, finer shades being ignored.

In the affective sphere, Freud and the psychoanalysts have emphasized the existence of affective complexes, of sentiments and tendencies, belonging to the realm of the subconscious, and unceasingly determining our actions without our being aware of the fact. Psychoanalysis, bringing them to light, enables us to gain control over them, and thus to escape their tyranny.

On the other hand, *in the representative sphere,* Bergson has founded his philosophy upon the distinction between intelligence and intuition. The latter slumbers in the depths of our being. It seems to possess much of the knowledge which is of the greatest importance to life. By the study of intuition we are able to solve certain problems which we might never have been able to solve on purely intellectualist lines. Without pausing to consider the metaphysical consequences which Bergson draws from this distinction, let us take it as it stands, considering it purely from the psychological outlook, from which we think it is hardly open to objection.

Finally, the New Nancy School embodies a movement parallel to the two just named, but a movement *in the active sphere.* In this field, by the very nature of things, the investigator is primarily led towards action rather than towards theory. Such was the path followed by Coué. Hitherto the New Nancy School has failed to become aware of the true psychological significance and of the vast bearing of its own affirmations. Suggestion (autosuggestion) is to the will what the complex is to the sentiment and what intuition is to intelligence.

The three foregoing doctrines, mutually complementary, agree in indicating that in all the spheres of the psyche there exist deep and hidden strata. Far from

being inferior in point of value to the superficial strata, the deeper strata frequently yield us fruits which could never be secured from the surface consciousness.

Thus by three independent and parallel routes, contemporary psychology discloses the subconscious, and makes available its precious stores of mineral wealth. Coué, like Freud and Bergson, prefers to speak of the "unconscious" rather than of the "subconscious," choosing the former term precisely because he wishes to emphasize his view that the consciousness in question is not to be regarded as inferior to the superficial consciousness.

Furthermore, the term "unconscious" conveys the idea that the deeper psychological processes appear to be more or less independent one of another; that they seem to be dissociated; that they do not, as does the superficial consciousness, constitute a synthesis centring in the ego (the idea of synthesis being expressed by the prefix "con"). On the other hand, the term "unconscious" is inconvenient because it applies equally well to purely physiological processes, to reflex action, to mechanical responses to stimuli. If we employ it, we have always to specify when we are speaking of a psychological unconscious. But in my opinion the term "subconscious" can be precisely defined as the psychological unconscious. The word is already current in psychology, and if it be clearly defined no confusion can possibly arise.[1]

[1] It is essential that writers on these topics should come to a definite understanding in regard to the use of these words. Bernheim, in a recently published work (Automatisme et suggestion, Alcan, Paris, 1917), is frequently the victim of a confusion in terms. He identifies the "subconscious" with a "vague

We may say, then, that psychoanalysis, intuitionism (considered apart from all metaphysics), and the teachings of the New Nancy School, contribute to the same general movement. These three doctrines enable us to enter the subconscious, open ways for us into the hidden recesses of our being. Thereby they greatly enlarge our knowledge of ourselves, disclosing the causes of what we have hitherto known only as effects. Since knowledge is power, they increase our command of life. At the same time they meet the wishes of William James, who regretted the way in which we live only on the surface of things. Henceforward we can penetrate into the depths, and we are entitled to expect great results from these new possibilities.

The parallelism might be carried still further, especially as regards the distinction between the views of Bergson and the views of Coué. Just as the organic control rendered possible by suggestion seems to be the recovery of an ancient heritage which had been lost in the course of evolution, so the Bergsonian intuition is at its deepest roots identified with instinct. Intuition is not so much to be won by a new conquest as to be reconquered. If we have lost it in the past, it is because our attention has been more and more attracted by the needs of outward activity, demanding new adaptations.

Intelligence constitutes one of these adaptations. It

consciousness"; whereas he regards the "unconscious" as a priori "non-psychological," and identifies it with "automatism." The consequence is that the phenomena of suggestion, not being automatic, are simply "conscious," and by very definition cannot be unconscious. By this paradox experiment is falsified and observation is distorted.

is the mode of knowledge which is applicable to crude matter, whereas intuition is the mode of knowledge which is applicable to life. Intuition is the primitive mode of knowledge, from which intelligence is derived by adaptation. That is why we can never arrive at intuition by way of intelligence, whereas we can pass from intuition to intelligence by following the path of differentiation which has been pursued by evolution.

Now there are identical relationships between suggestion and the will.

If this be so, we may sum up the distinction by saying that the will is the normal mode of acting on matter, on the external world, whereas suggestion is the normal mode of acting on ourselves quâ living beings. Experience confirms the hypothesis.

When we wish to act on the physical world we must seek to know the laws which regulate its mechanism, we must endeavour to elucidate the unending sequences of cause and effect. We are compelled to understand, consciously to grasp, the nexus of causality. The will, fully conscious, is at work.

But when we come to act on ourselves we can employ a very different method, that of suggestion. Here the saying, Who wills the end wills the means, is no longer valid. It suffices to *think* the end. Everything then ensues as if our subconscious were familiar with all the details of our physical and mental organism, and as if it could deduce from this knowledge the means necessary for realizing the proposed end. Here the end which has to be attained appears to find its own means, just as the poem which is to be born gives rise in the mind of the poet to the words fit for its expression.

But if we are living beings in whom teleology tends to

realize itself spontaneously, we are none the less parts of the material world, the world where mechanism reigns. Consequently, an action analogous to that which we exercise on the physical world, remains legitimate. Such an action is exerted in the ordinary practice of medicine.

It follows that medicine and suggestion are complementary, like a couple of forces acting in contrary directions and therefore unable to rival one another. Or we may say that the first acts from without, being centripetal. The second acts from within, being centrifugal. Though each taken alone is doubtless inadequate, by uniting they can realize the fable of the blind man and the paralytic.

Suggestive practice, therefore, must not be looked upon as a chapter of medicine, any more than suggestion must be regarded as a special case of will. The two belong to distinct categories. Suggestive practice is not properly speaking a therapeutic method. With the work of the New Nancy School it passes from the medical to the pedagogical sphere. It does not so much consist of a descriptive science as of an education or reëducation of certain mental aptitudes and habits which human beings have been tending more and more to lose.

Modern times have been characterized by the conquest of the material world. It is therefore natural that, when we turn back to man, we should retain the habits of thought we have contracted in our prolonged intercourse with the physical universe. Such is the invariable method of conventional medicine. Thereby, however, it reaches no more than a part of the human being. It moves from without inwards, though there is just as much need that it should radiate from the centre to the

periphery. It has a wide knowledge of the effect of physical agents upon man, but we still have to learn the reaction of the human mind upon physical agents.

The work of modern science is a great achievement, but it is incomplete. For its completion a certain change is necessary both in outlook and method. As the philosopher Spir has well put it, "We are masters of nature externally alone, inwardly we are nature's slaves." Studying only too well all that surrounds us, we have forgotten our own personality, and now or never is the moment when we must put into practice the Socratic maxim "Know thyself." The doctrine of the New Nancy School, in conjunction with other doctrines of contemporary psychology, enables us to make a great advance in this knowledge.

GLOSSARY

Acceptation. The acceptance of an idea by the subconscious.

Acceptivity. The readiness with which the subconscious accepts an idea. (Readiness to accept heterosuggestion.)

Autosuggestion. The subconscious realization of an idea in more or less complete independence of heterosuggestion.

Censor, The, or The endopsychic censor. A figurative impersonation to denote the sum of repressive forces.

Collectedness. The state of outcropping of the subconscious resulting from a willed (but not voluntary) relaxation. (See **Relaxation,** below.)

Complex. A group of emotionally tinged ideas partially or entirely repressed. (Usual Definition of Psychoanalysts.) An integration of images, memories, sentiments, conscious and unconscious reasonings, interlacing one with another, and to all appearance inextricably intertangled (Baudouin).

Concentration. A state of autohypnosis and of persistent contention with one idea, the autohypnosis having been induced by the lulling influence of the idea on the mind.

Contention. Is a psychological equivalent of attention, minus effort. It is the state we attain to by means of collectedness (q.v.). Some writers term this state concentration, but see **Concentration.**

Derivation. See **Sublimation.**

Fascination. The capturing of the attention by some sensory phenomenon.

Fixed Idea. The ultimate degree of obsession.

Foreconscious. See **Preconscious.**

Hallucination. An imaginary sensation, one to which no objective reality corresponds.

Hallucination by Compromise. A hallucination suggested by the illusory interpretation of an objective reality.

Heterosuggestion. The subconscious realization of an idea suggested by another.
Also, the act of suggesting an idea to another.

Hypnosis. A general name for states of outcropping of the subconscious produced by immobilization of the attention, and for states of somnolence which are distinguishable from ordinary drowsiness by their mode of production.

Ideoreflex Process. The process by which an idea realizes itself or tends to realize itself in action. (It is to this that Baudouin limits the signification of the term suggestion.)

Obsession. The capturing of the attention by something purely subjective, an image, a memory, or an idea.

Outcropping of the Subconscious. The invasion of the normal waking consciousness by uprushes from the subconscious.

Passivity. See **Acceptivity.**

Preconscious. A region of the mind containing memory traces which can only be aroused by exceptionally strong stimuli or by special effort. (This region is transitional between consciousness and the subconscious. Usually spoken of by psychoanalysts as the "foreconscious.")

Relaxation. The release of mental tension, the cessation of attention and the suspension of inhibition, which favours the outcropping of the subconscious. This relaxation is the outcome of a decision of the will, but a decision in virtue of which the will abdicates

for a season. "Relaxation" is precisely this abdication.

Repression. The keeping from consciousness of mental processes that would be painful to it.

Schemata. Fragmentary or simplified equivalents of sensations, emotions, sentiments, memories, images and other mental states.

Subconscious. A region of the mind normally inaccessible to consciousness. (Usually spoken of by psychoanalysts as the "unconscious." See pp. 329 and 330.)

Sublimation. The employment of energy belonging to a primitive instinct in a new and derived, i. e. non-primitive, channel. E. g. the use of sexual energy in "intellectual" love or creative artistic work (Tansley). The process of enlisting the unconscious in the work that is available for social purposes (Lay).

Suggestibility. Readiness to realize a suggestion. (In Baudouin's use of the term—in more or less complete independence of heterosuggestion.) Readiness to realize an autosuggestion.

Suggestion. The subconscious realization of an idea. (See also **Ideoreflex Process.**)

Transference. The mental substitution, for an abstract emotional object, of some visible object which can symbolically represent it.

Unconscious. See **Subconscious.**

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